



3

# Magus of the Library

Mitsu  
Izumi

Based on *Kafna of the Wind* by Sophie Schwimm  
Translated by Hiroto Hamada



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3





"The Palena Conference"

Scene from the performance art piece *The Legend of the Great Magus*

## Magus of the Library

3

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*“To protect a text is to protect the world itself.”*

—Words of the One Who Did Not Return

From *The Book with No Name*

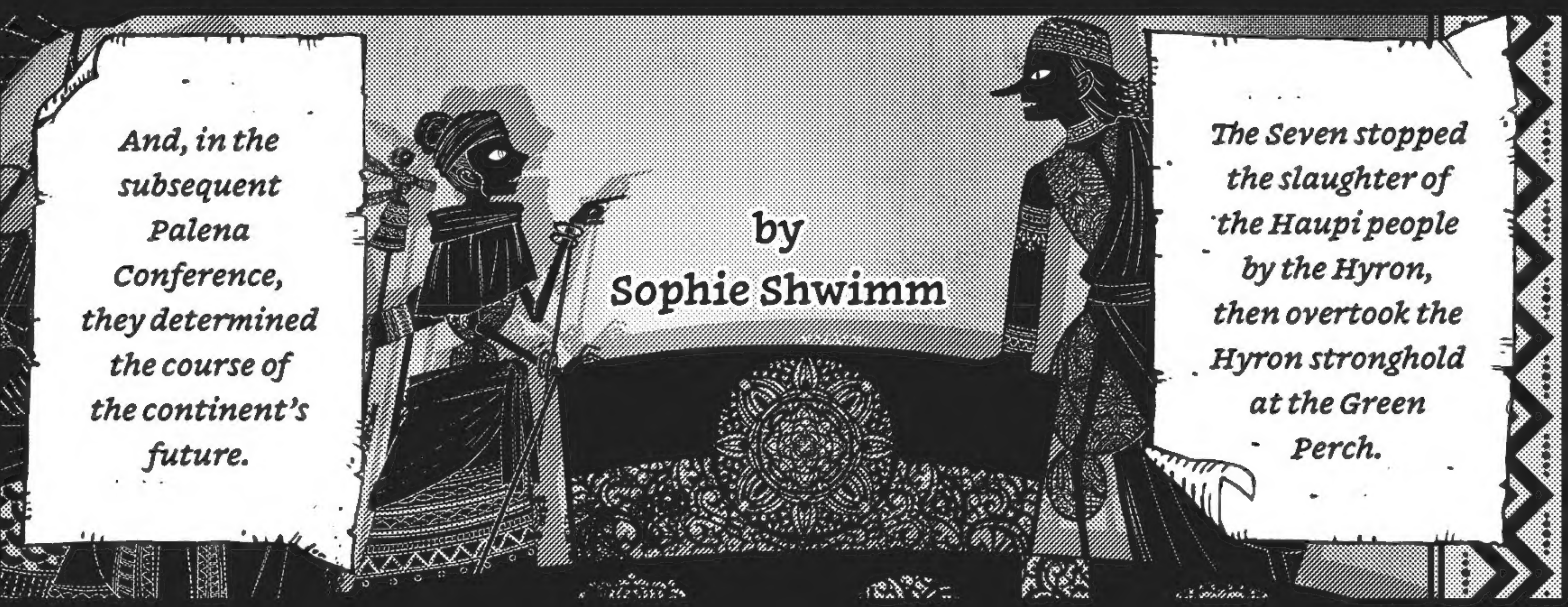




*...struggled for space in a devastated world. It was the selfsame magi who also quelled this new war.*

**Based on  
*Kafna of the Wind***

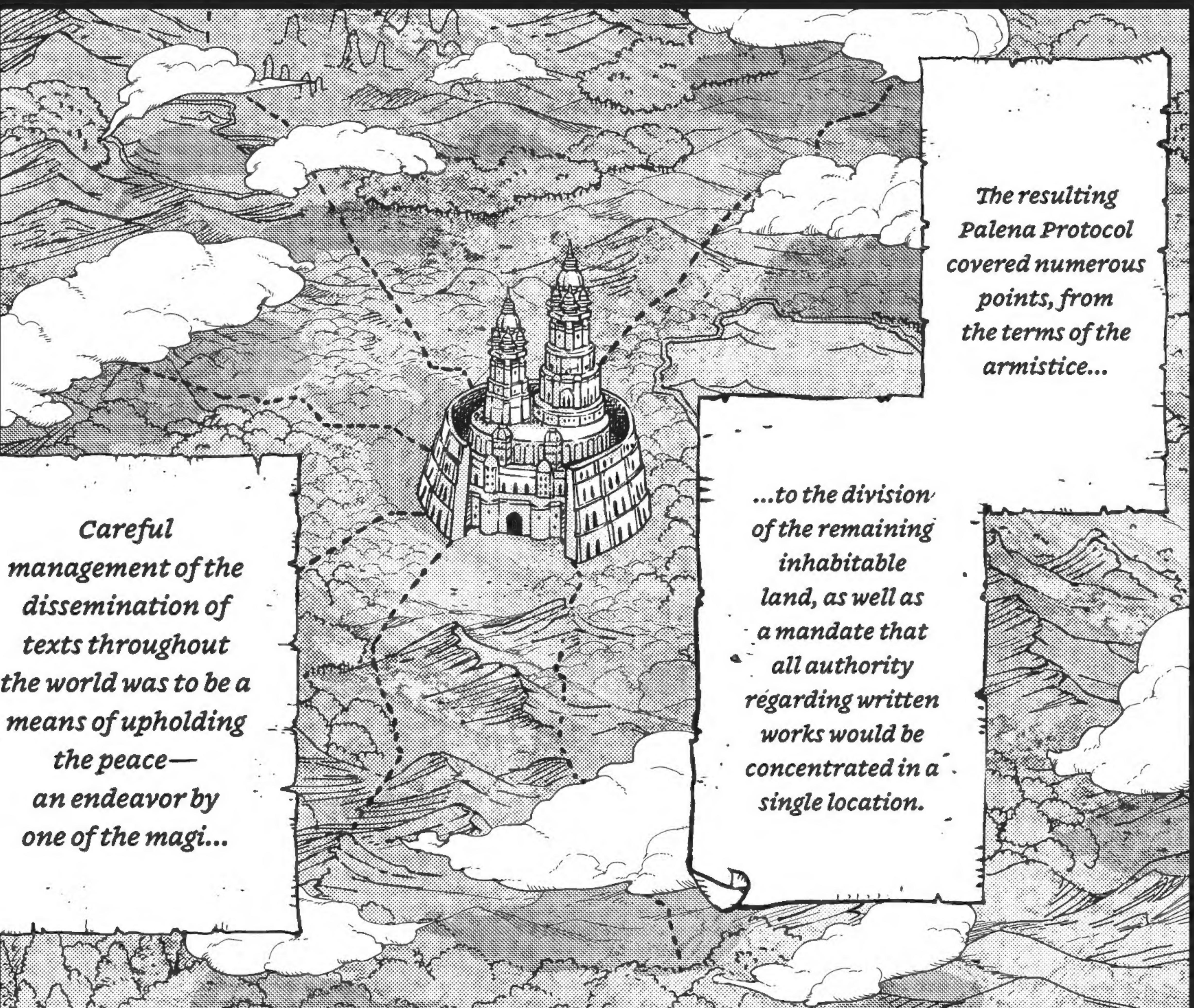
*Though the Seven Magi defeated the Emissary, war once more engulfed the continent as each race...*



*And, in the subsequent Palena Conference, they determined the course of the continent's future.*

**by  
Sophie Shwimm**

*The Seven stopped the slaughter of the Haupi people by the Hyron, then overtook the Hyron stronghold at the Green Perch.*

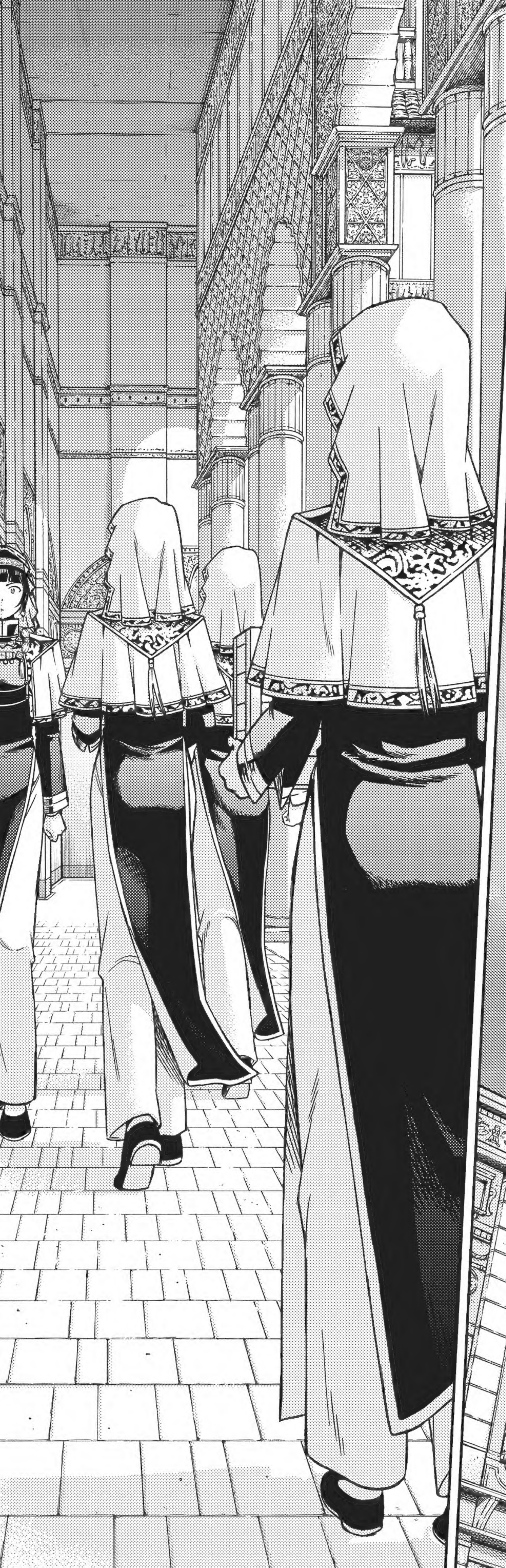


*The resulting Palena Protocol covered numerous points, from the terms of the armistice...*

*Careful management of the dissemination of texts throughout the world was to be a means of upholding the peace—an endeavor by one of the magi...*

*...to the division of the remaining inhabitable land, as well as a mandate that all authority regarding written works would be concentrated in a single location.*

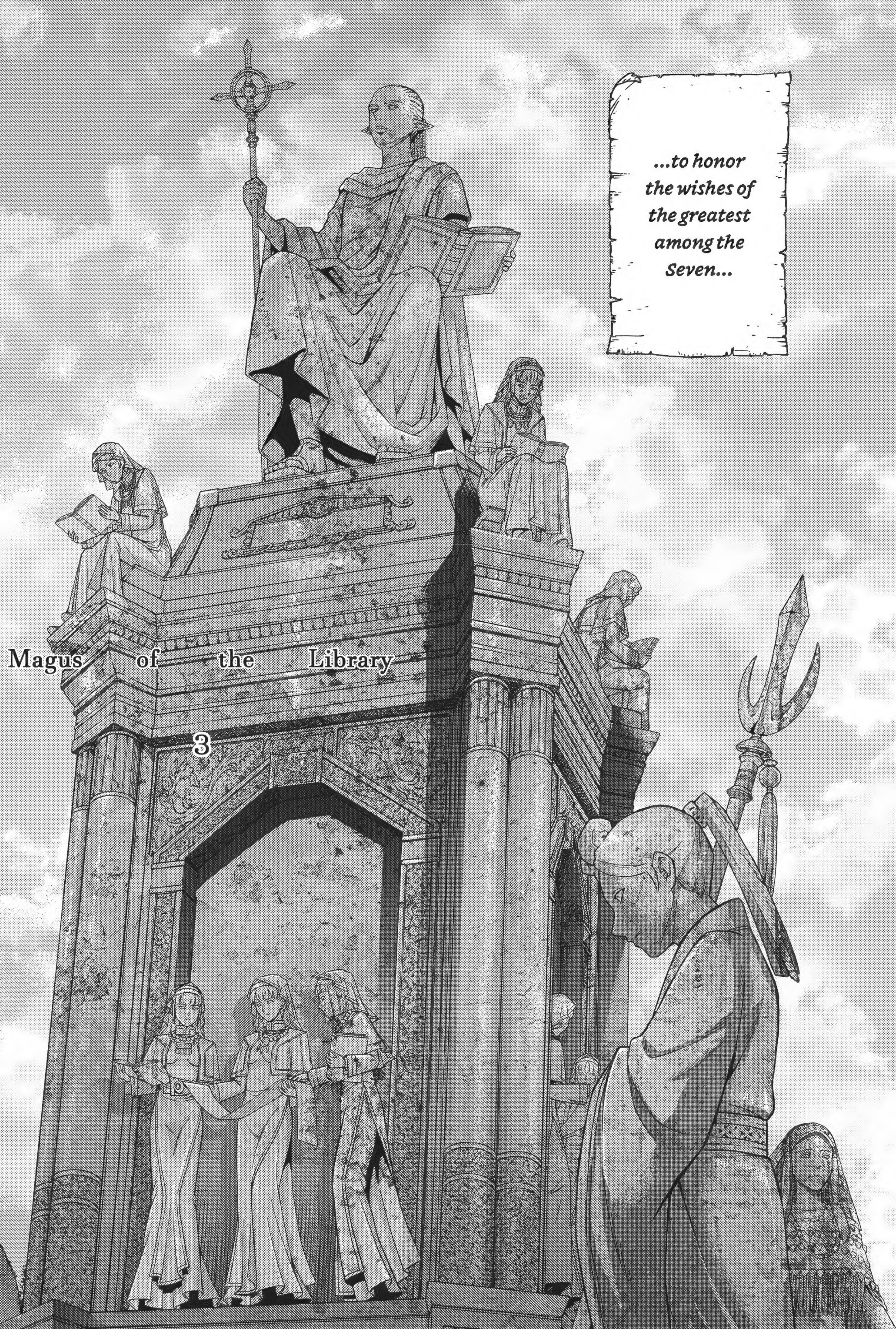




*...the only one to  
not return from  
the struggle with  
the Emissary.*



Magus of the Library



*...to honor  
the wishes of  
the greatest  
among the  
Seven...*





READY  
FOR  
ANOTHER  
BATCH?

THIS ONE  
TO PILE  
TWO,  
PLEASE!

THIS  
STACK'S  
READY TO  
PICK UP!

*Grading Station, Personnel Office:  
Immediately after the written exam*

READY  
TO  
SWAP?

PICKUP  
FOR PILE  
ONE!

10

## *A Mask and a Magus*



HMM.

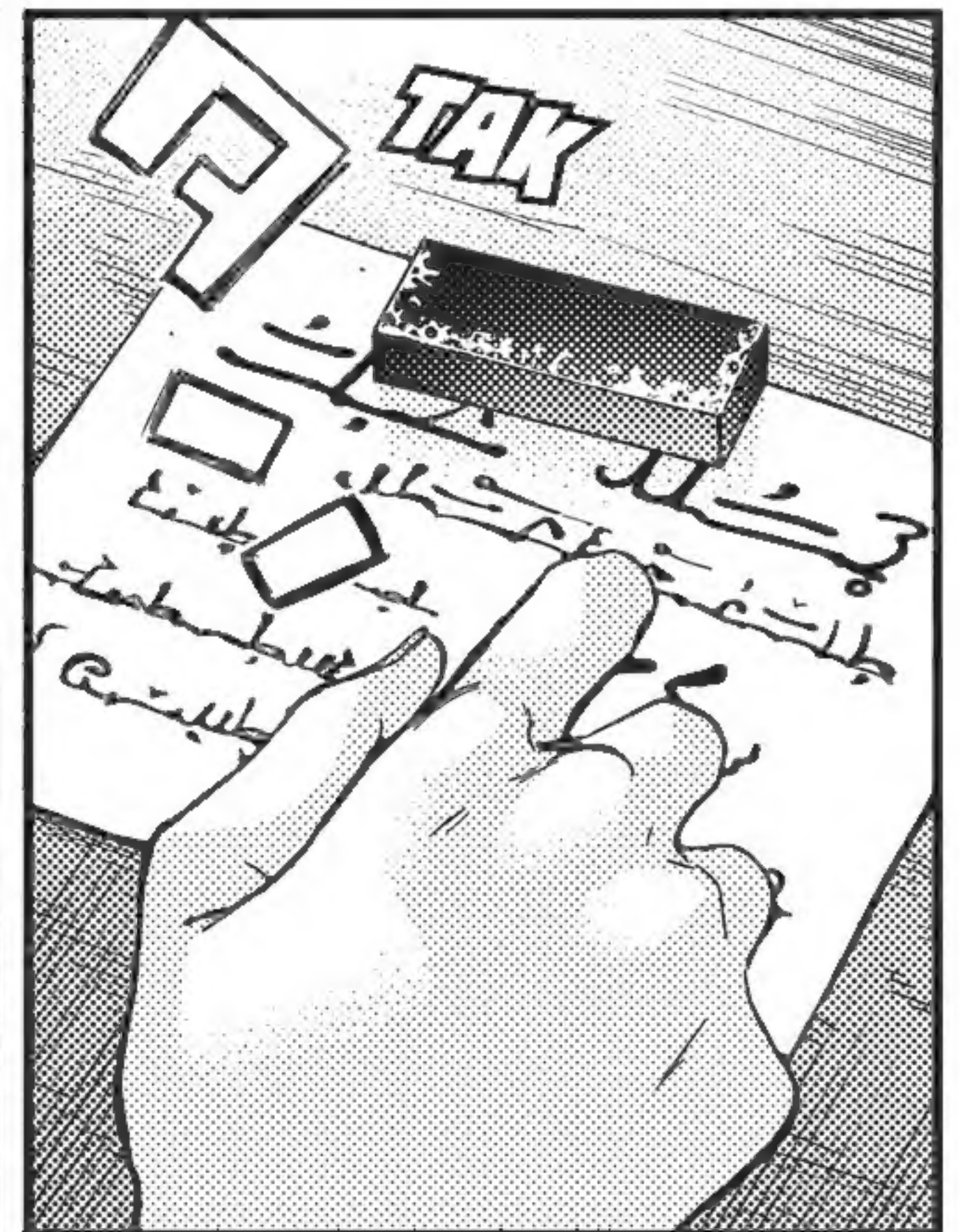
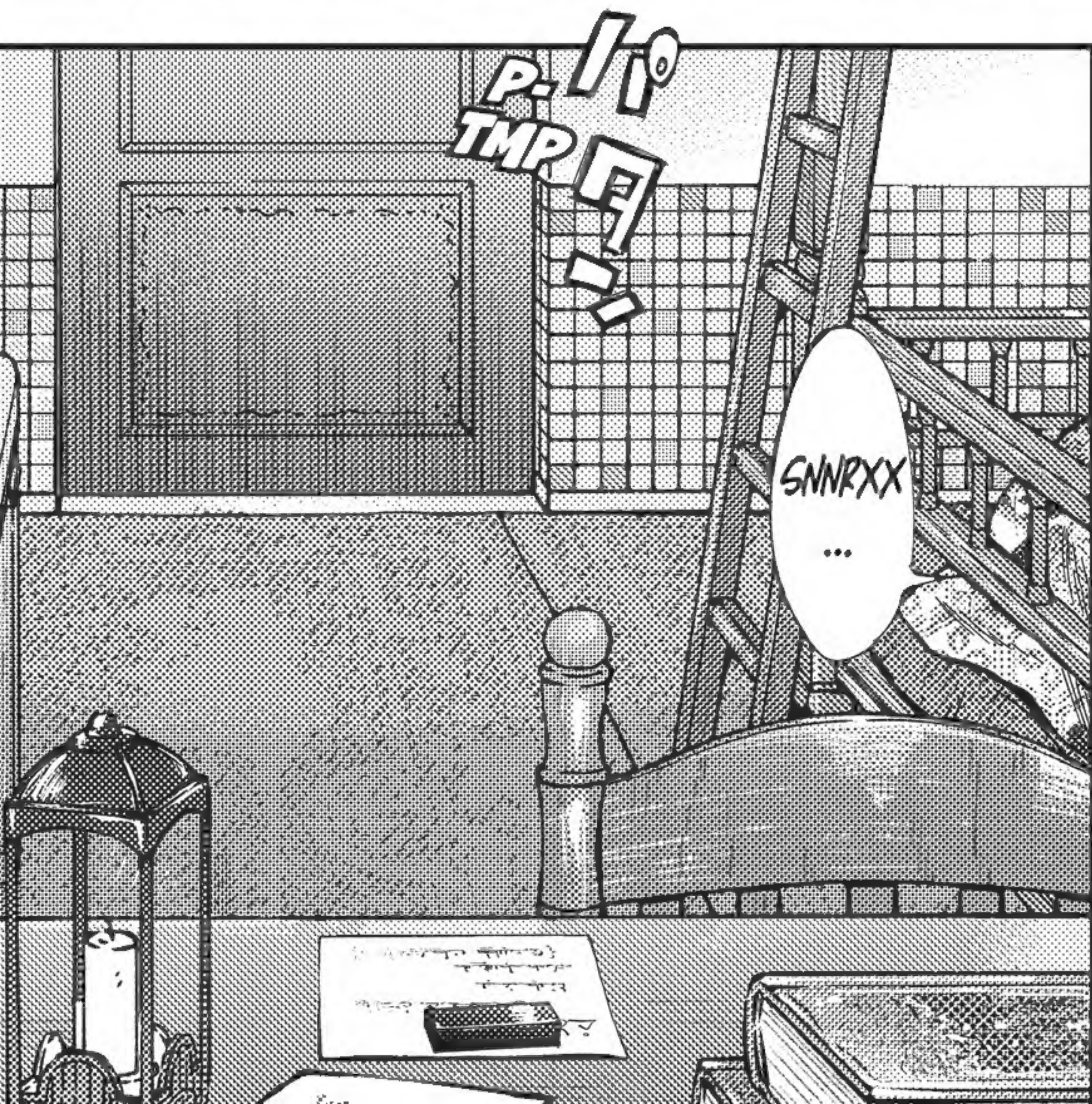
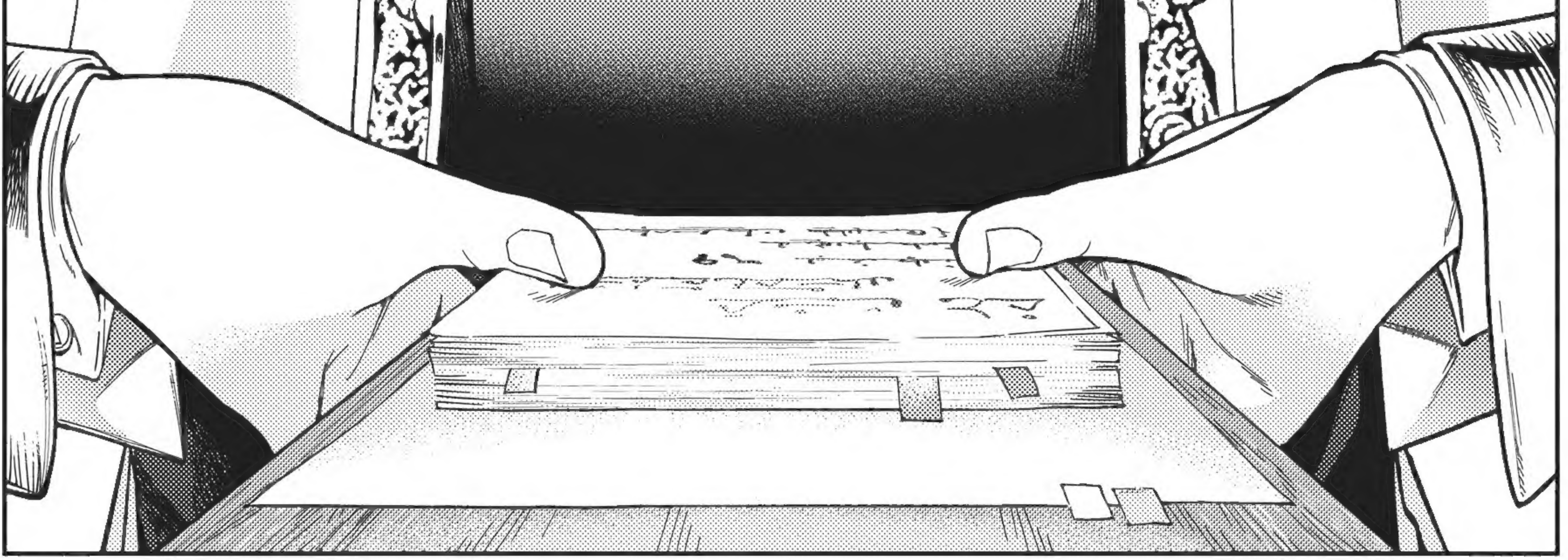
THE POOR  
WEATHER  
PROBABLY  
HAD A HAND  
IN IT, TOO.

A LOT OF  
OVERWHELMED  
EXAMINEES. THE  
QUESTIONS WERE  
MORE DIFFICULT  
THAN USUAL.

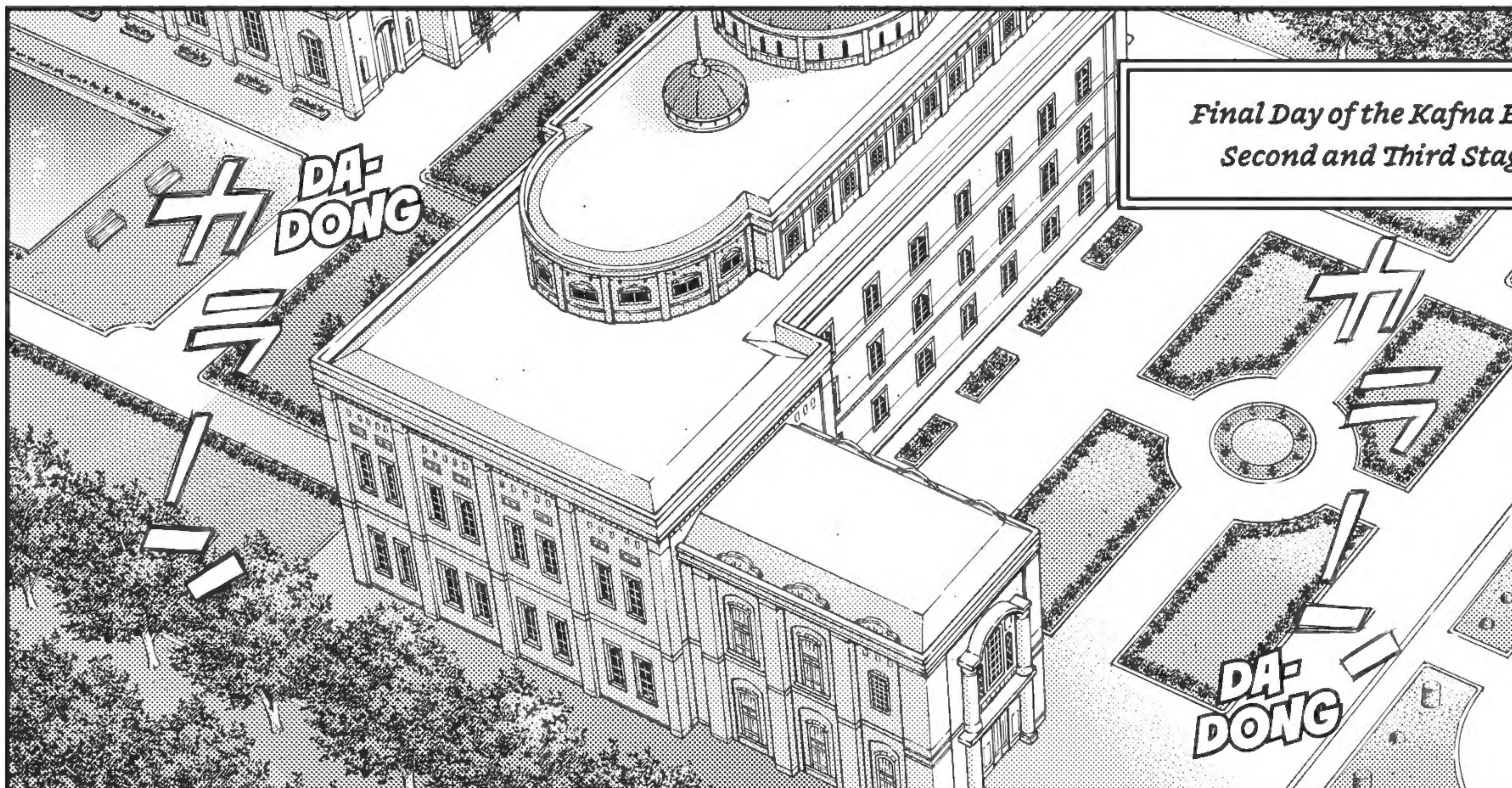
HOW  
DOES IT  
LOOK THIS  
YEAR?











*Final Day of the Kafna Exam  
Second and Third Stages*



AND NO  
SPLIT  
ENDS.



SKIN,  
CHECK.



TEETH,  
CHECK.



NAILS,  
CHECK.



JUST TO  
BE SAFE.

*Nails,  
check.*

PERFECT.

BUT I'LL  
CHECK  
THEM ALL  
ONE LAST  
TIME.





H A A W W N N ...

COULD STILL...

...GO FOR...

...ANOTHER DAY OF SLEEP.



P-TMP



DA-DONG

DA-DONG



ス  
7  
RISE..."



WHIRL



TUG



MRMPH ...









MAYBE IF  
I HEAD  
DOWN-  
STAIRS...

LET'S SEE...  
I WONDER  
WHERE THE  
INTERVIEWS  
ARE...

LOOK  
AFTER  
THE ROOM  
WHILE I'M  
AWAY!



HOW MANY DO  
YOU THINK MADE  
IT THROUGH THE  
PRELIMINARY  
GRADING THIS  
YEAR?

YEAH, I DID,  
BUT UKIHA  
WASN'T SO  
LUCKY.

HOW'D IT  
GO? PASS  
THE FIRST  
STAGE?



**WHAT WAS  
THAT ABOUT  
PRELIMINARY  
GRADING??!?**

I WAS SO  
RATTLED WHEN  
I SAW THE  
NOTIFICATION  
SLIP, I BASHED  
MY ELBOW ON  
THE DESK.

**HAHA/  
YOU  
WOULD!**

WHO KNOWS?  
LAST YEAR, I  
HEARD THEY  
WHITTLED IT  
DOWN TO A  
HUNDRED.

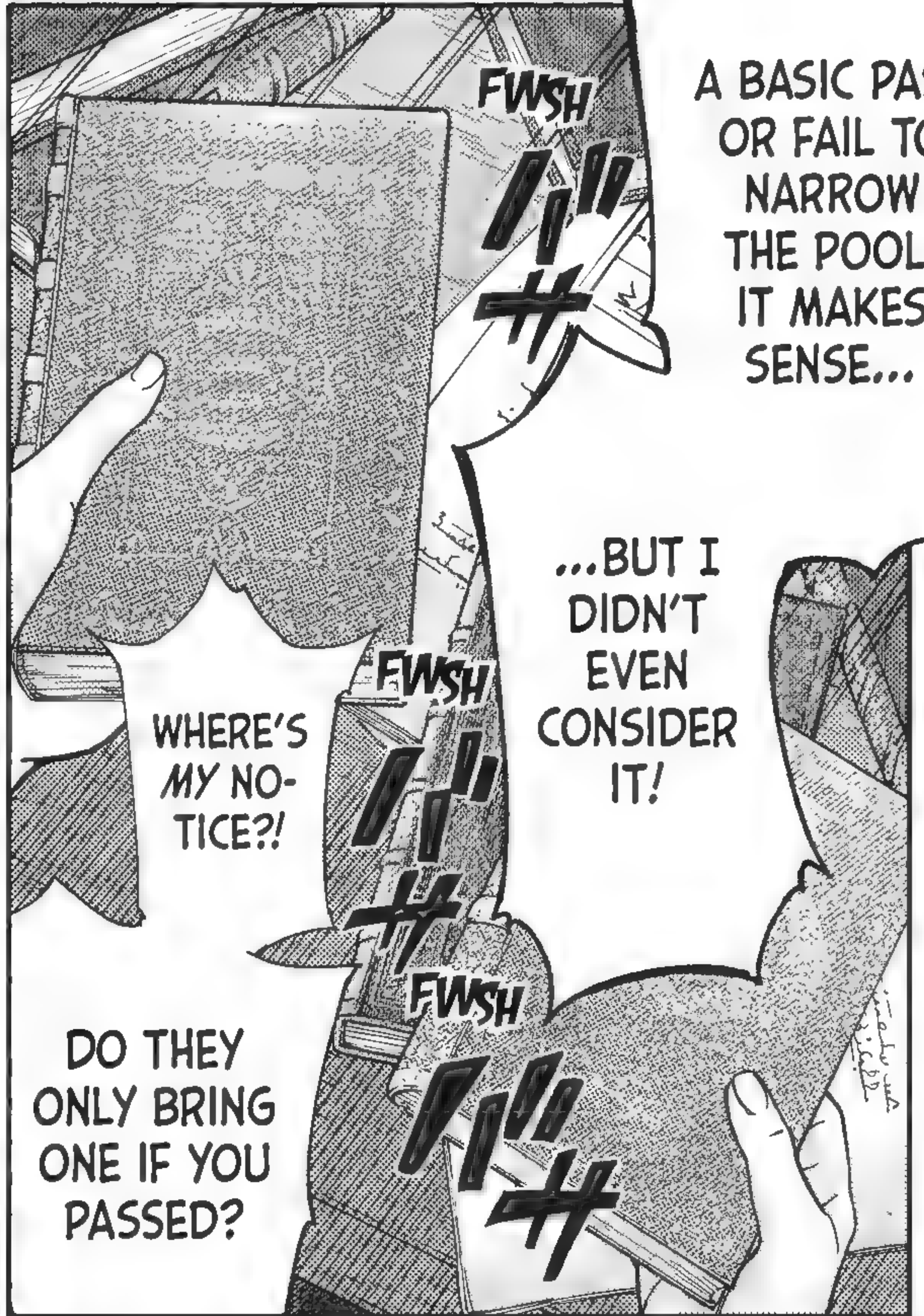




...BUT  
800 CUT  
DOWN TO  
100?

THEY  
CAN'T RUN  
INTERVIEWS  
FOR EVERY  
EXAMINEE...

ISN'T  
THAT A  
LITTLE  
HARSH?!

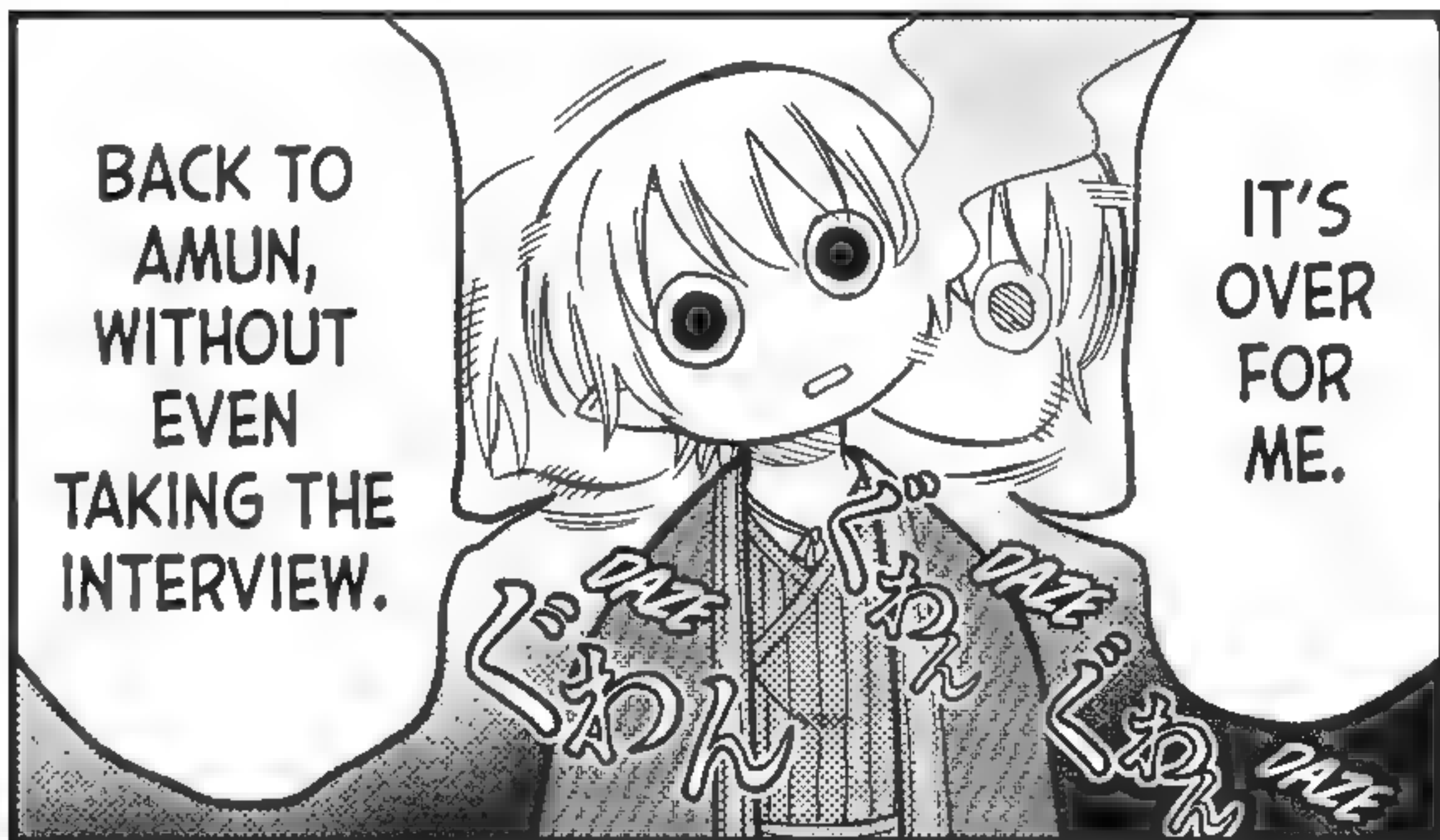


A BASIC PASS  
OR FAIL TO  
NARROW  
THE POOL.  
IT MAKES  
SENSE...

...BUT I  
DIDN'T  
EVEN  
CONSIDER  
IT!

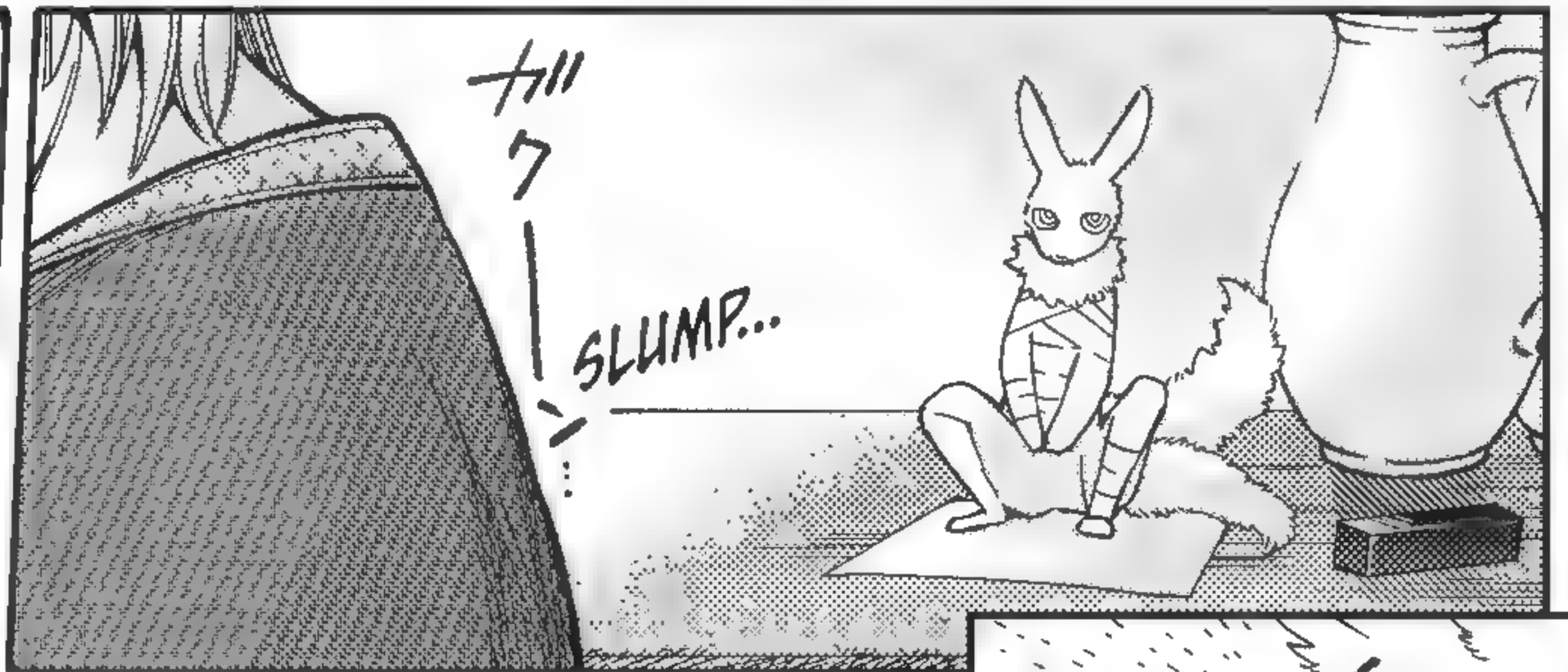
WHERE'S  
MY NO-  
TICE?!

DO THEY  
ONLY BRING  
ONE IF YOU  
PASSED?



BACK TO  
AMUN,  
WITHOUT  
EVEN  
TAKING THE  
INTERVIEW.

IT'S  
OVER  
FOR  
ME.



SLUMP...



HEE  
HEE  
HEE!

FWIP



THEO FUMIS

PRELIMINARY  
SCREENING: PASSED

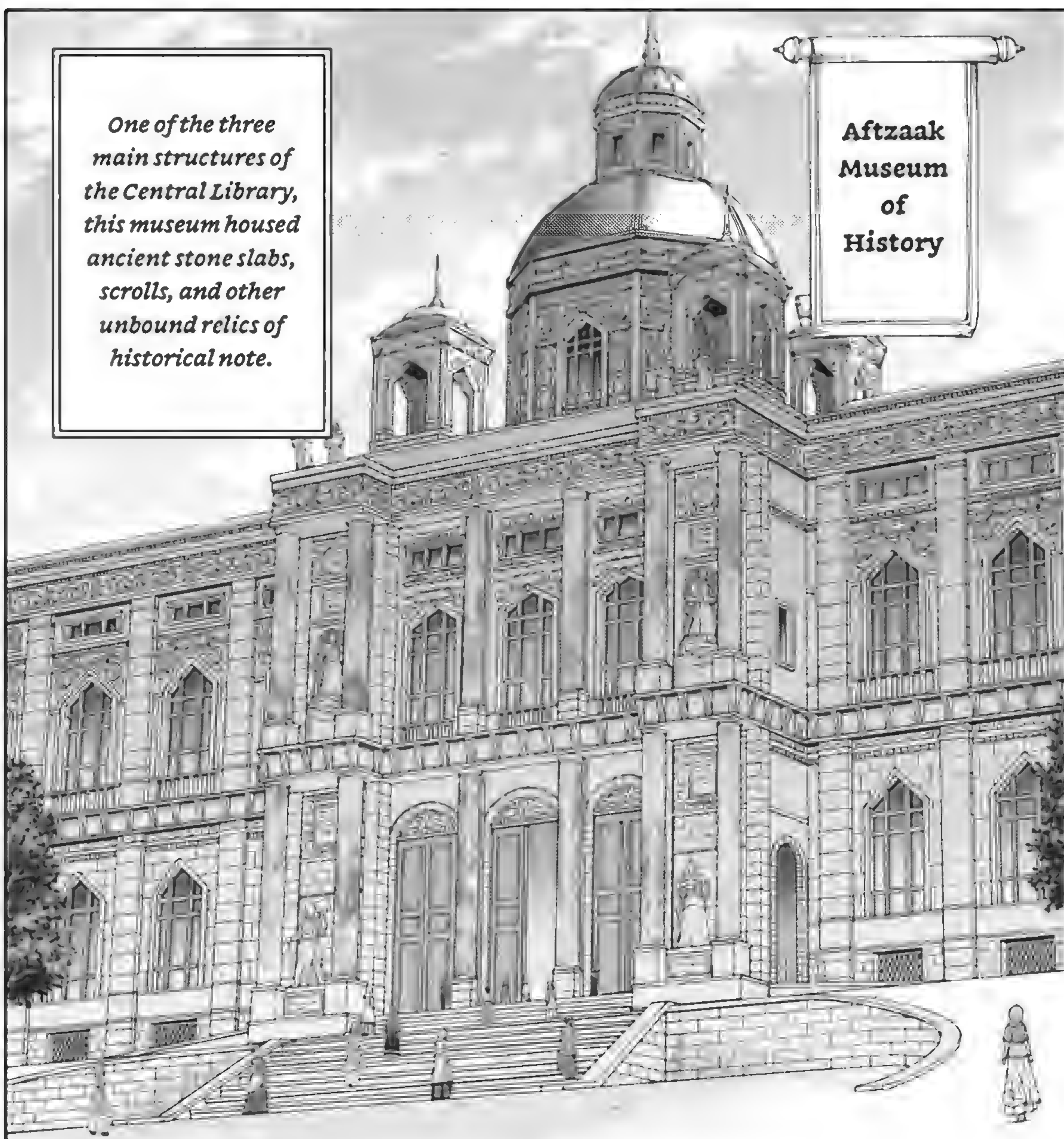
EXAMINEE NUMBER: 54

INTERVIEW TO BE  
CONDUCTED IN THE  
MUSEUM OF HISTORY.

تمت  
المسابقة  
التي  
عقدت في  
المتحف  
التاريخي  
في  
الجزيرة العربية  
في  
الرياض  
في  
العام  
الحاضر  
{سجلت  
النتائج  
في  
المتحف  
التاريخي}

*One of the three  
main structures of  
the Central Library,  
this museum housed  
ancient stone slabs,  
scrolls, and other  
unbound relics of  
historical note.*

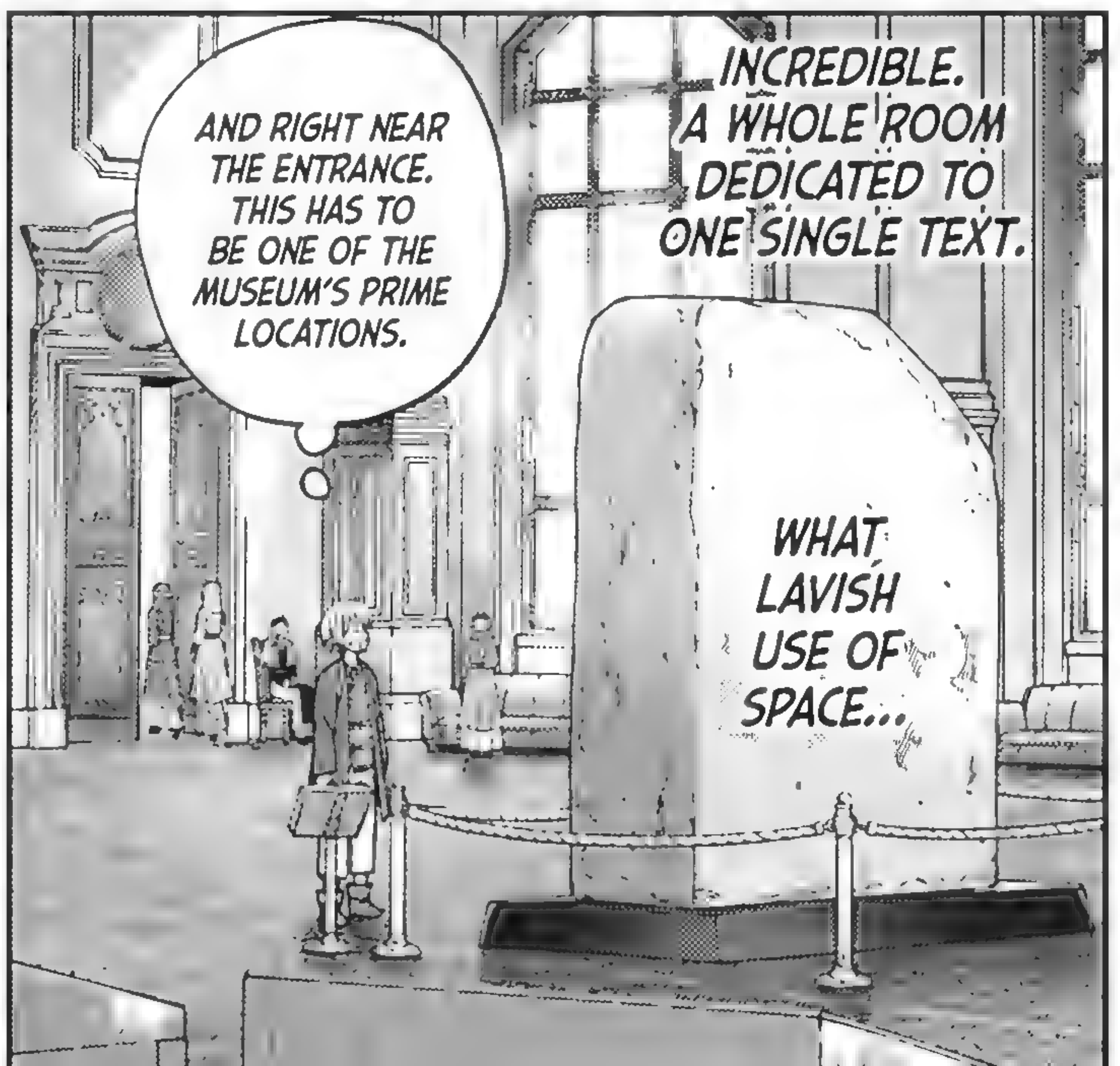
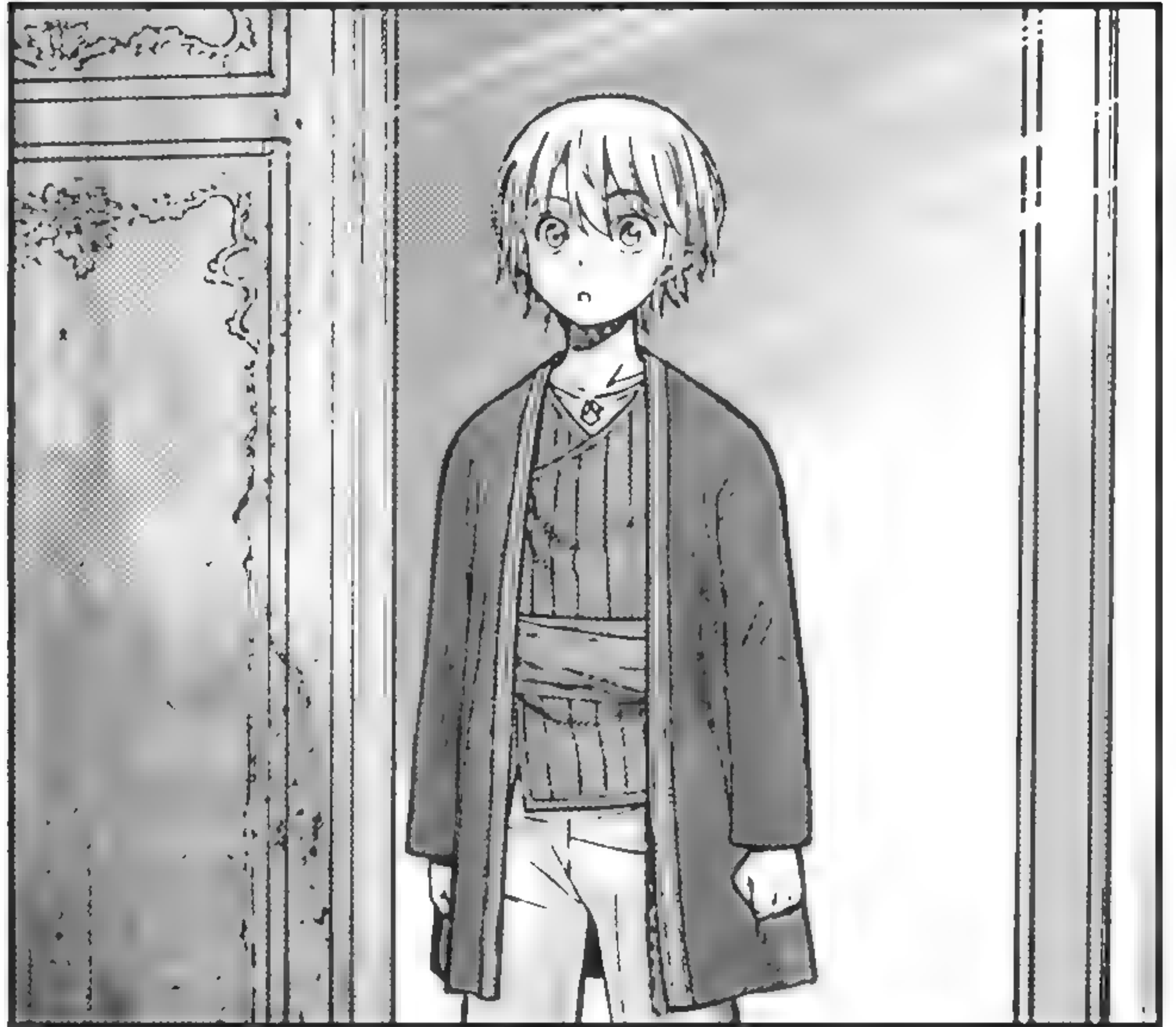
Aftzaak  
Museum  
of  
History



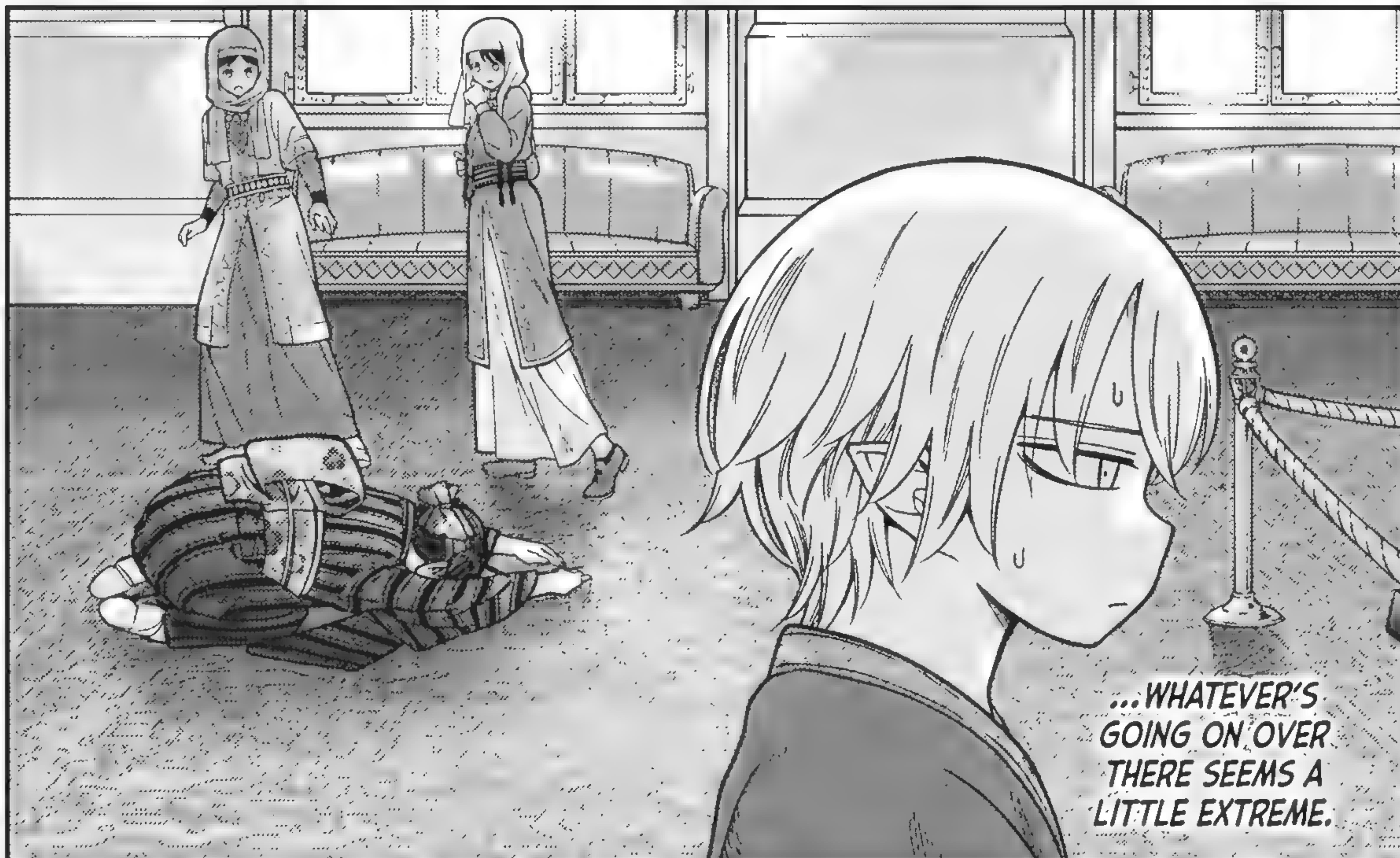












...WHATEVER'S  
GOING ON OVER  
THERE SEEMS A  
LITTLE EXTREME.

IT'S HER FIRST  
TIME TO THE  
LIBRARY. HER FIRST  
REAL ENCOUNTER  
WITH THESE TEXTS  
SHE'S READ SO MUCH  
ABOUT. SHE'S  
SO OVERWHELMED,  
SHE'S COMPELLED  
TO PROSTRATE!



OF  
COURSE!



MAY  
GRACE  
BE  
SHED...

?!



SEEMS I  
STILL HAVE  
A LONG WAY  
TO GO IN MY  
APPRECIATION  
FOR TEXTS...

I  
CAN'T  
EVEN  
COM-  
PARE  
!!

JOY SO  
INTENSE, IT  
PHYSICALLY  
OVER-  
WHELMS...

WHAT  
IN THE  
WORLD?

EW.  
SO UN-  
SEEMLY...



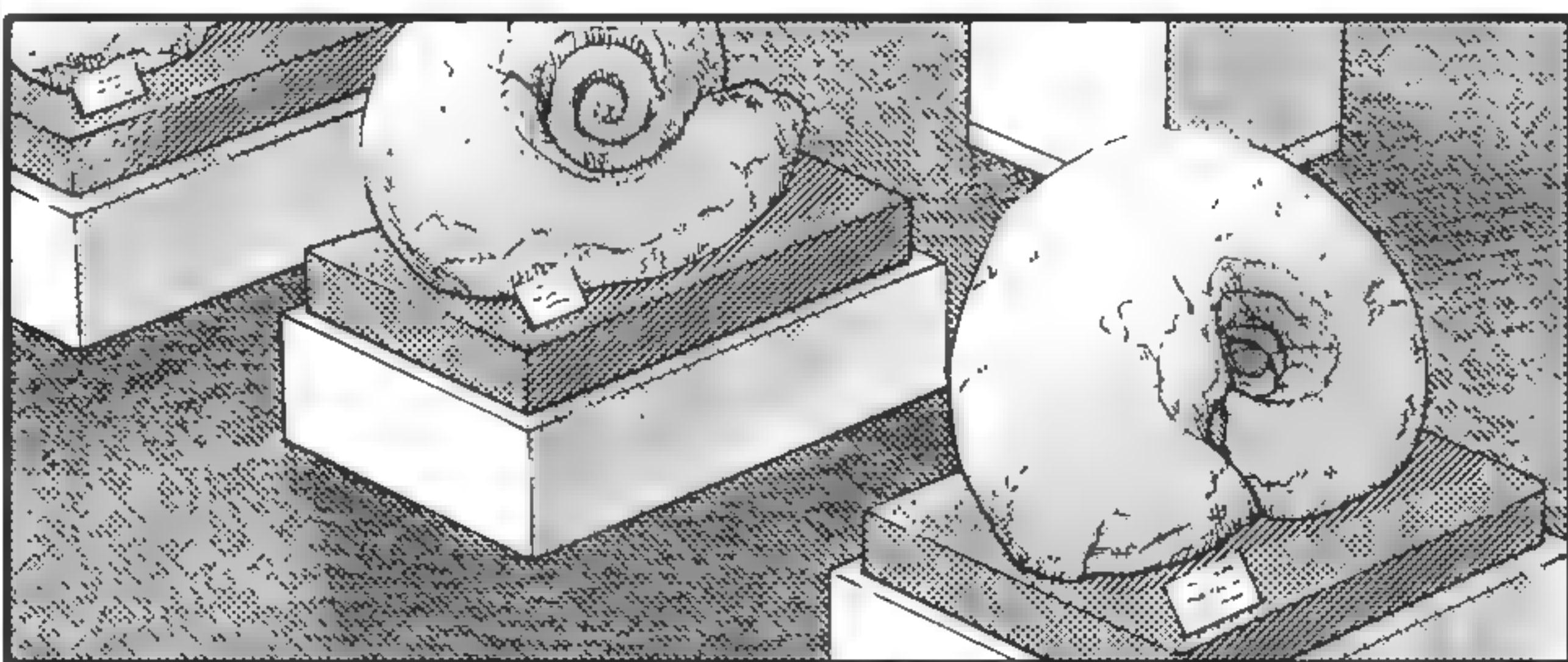
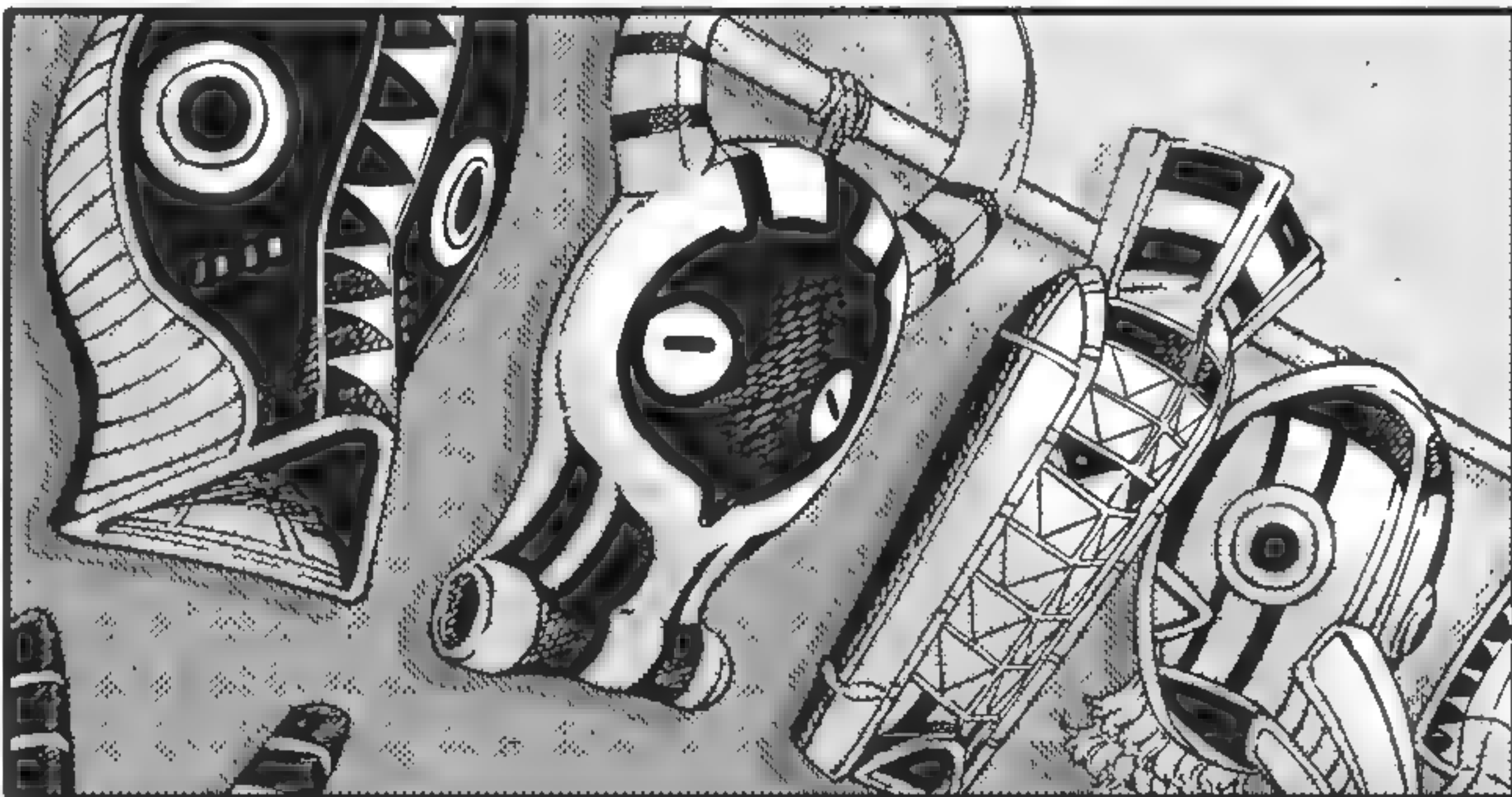
I UNDER-  
STAND HOW  
SHE FEELS!





WOW...

THIS MUSEUM  
IS JUST AS  
BREATHTAKING  
AS ALL THE  
OTHERS  
HERE...



MY  
PROFOUND  
APOLOGIES!

THAT'S  
THE GIRL  
WHO WAS  
PRAYING!

!



GUESS I  
SHOULD  
GET BACK.  
THEY  
MIGHT  
CALL ME  
SOON.

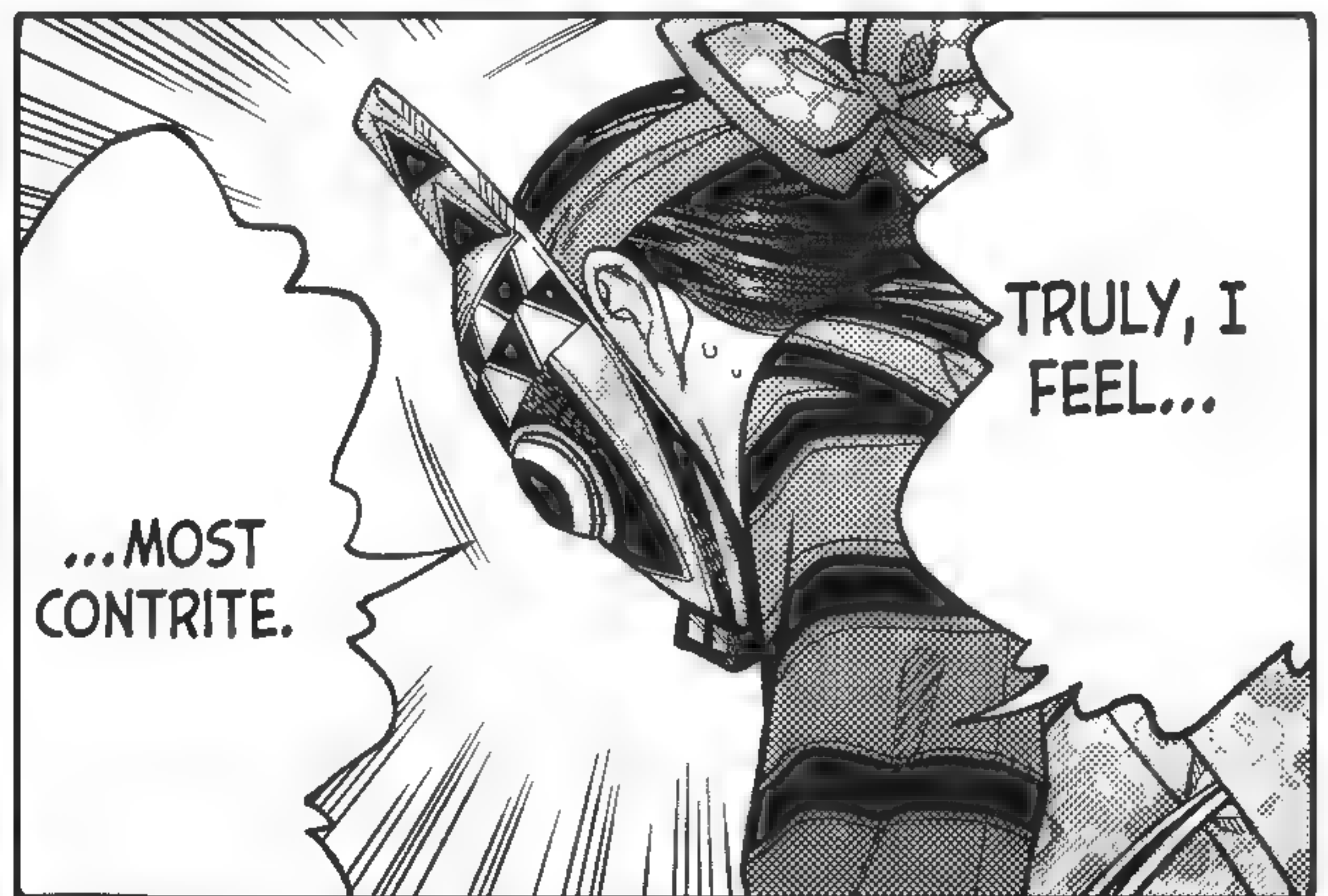
There's  
no way  
I'll get  
through  
it all...



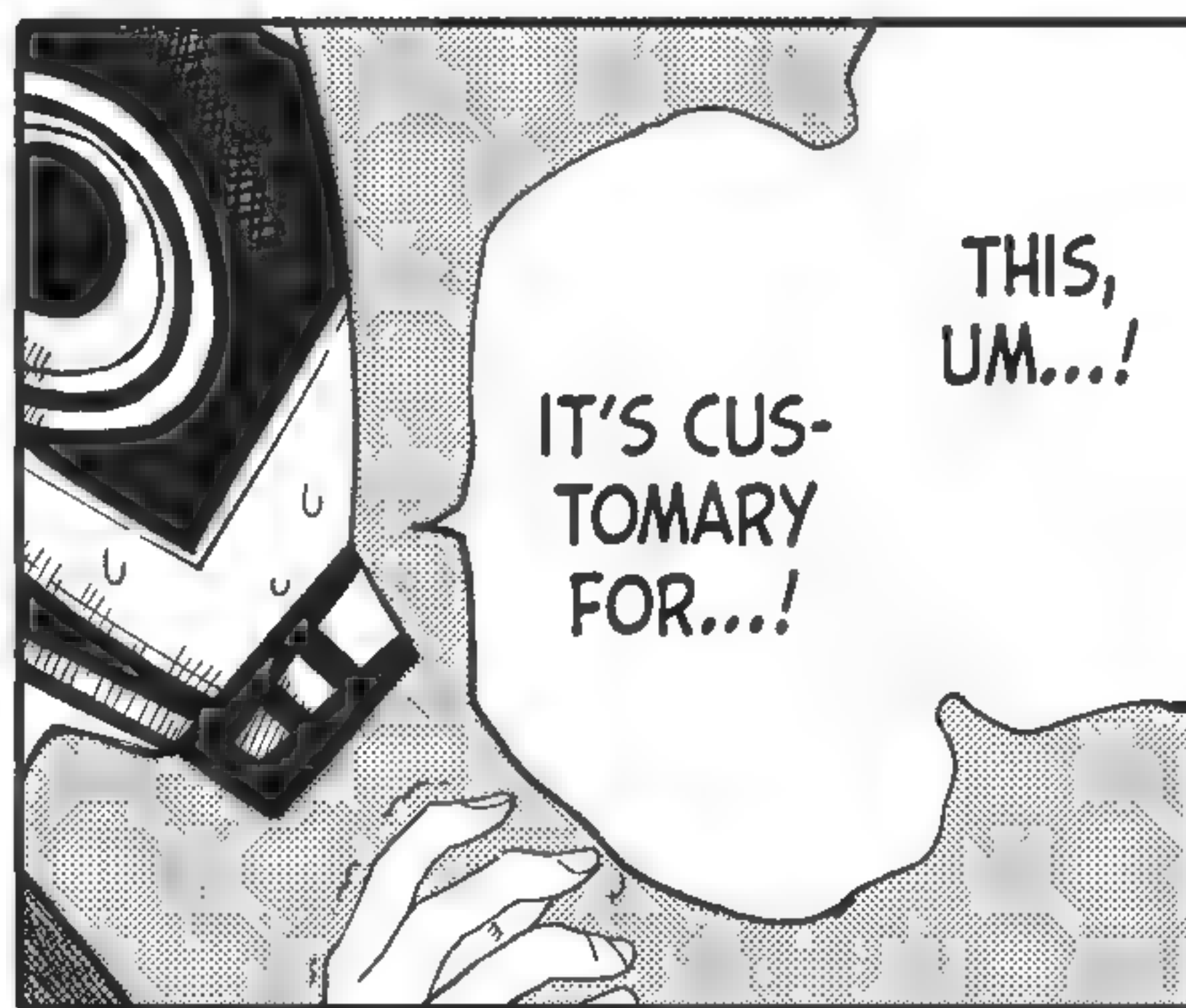
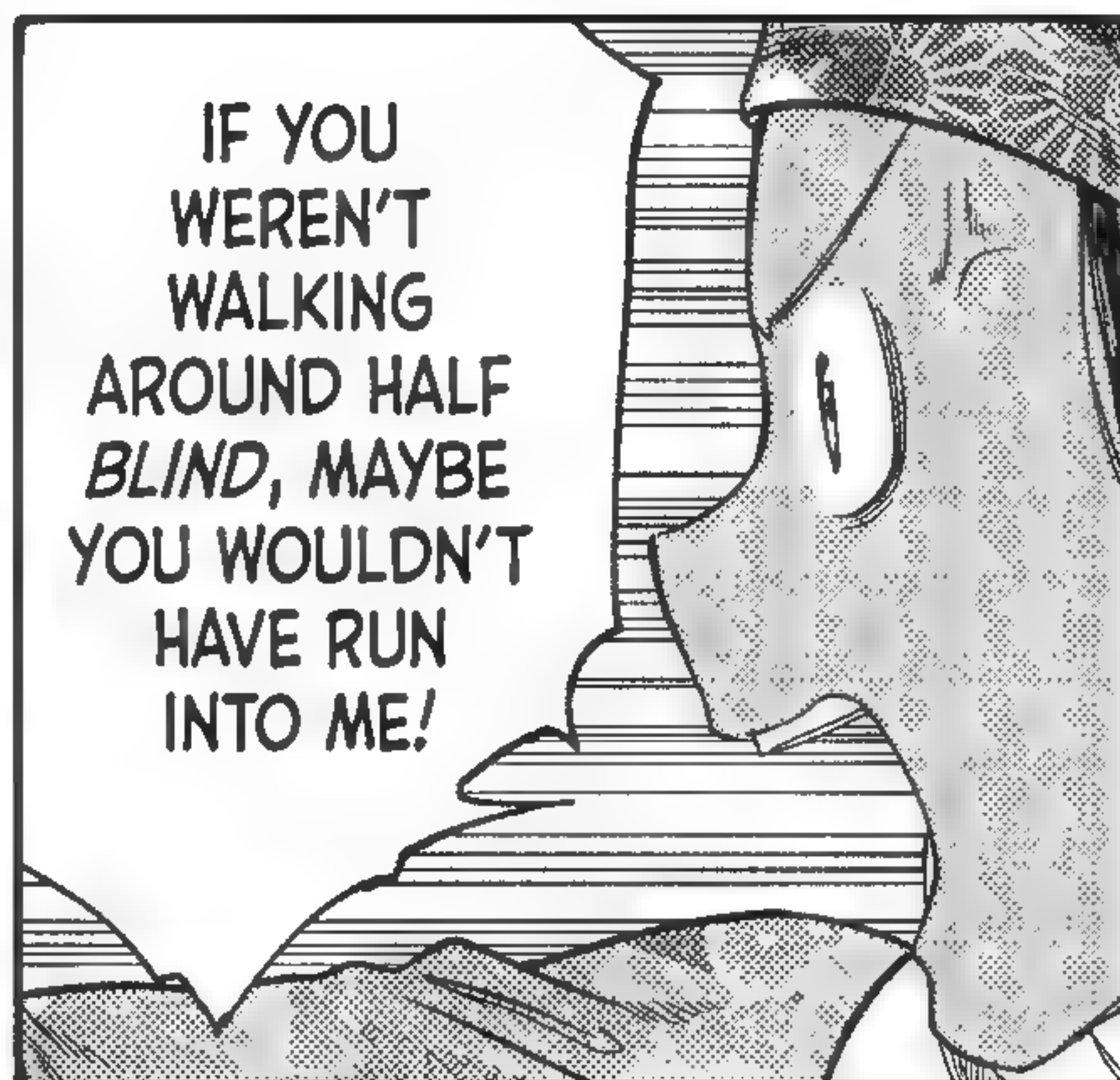
?!

AND WHAT  
ARE YOU  
GOING TO  
DO ABOUT  
IT?!







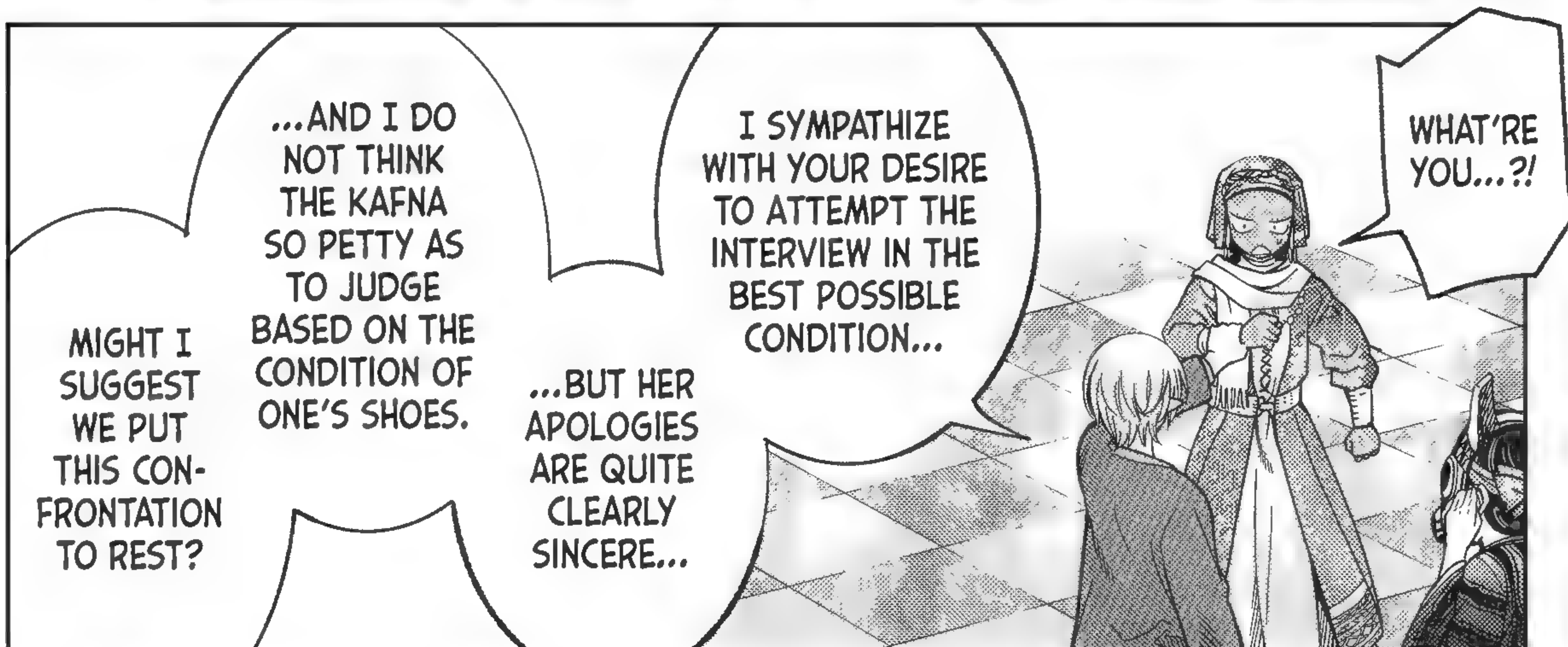






DEMANDING  
REMOVAL OF A  
KADOE'S MASK  
IS AKIN TO YOU  
BEING FORCED  
TO STRIP OFF  
YOUR CLOTHES.

THEY DO NOT  
REMOVE THEM FOR  
ANYONE OUTSIDE OF  
IMMEDIATE FAMILY.  
WHOMEVER SHE  
MARRIES IS TO BE  
THE FIRST AND ONLY  
OTHER TO HAVE THE  
HONOR OF SEEING  
HER FACE.



MIGHT I  
SUGGEST  
WE PUT  
THIS CON-  
FRONTATION  
TO REST?

...AND I DO  
NOT THINK  
THE KAFNA  
SO PETTY AS  
TO JUDGE  
BASED ON THE  
CONDITION OF  
ONE'S SHOES.

...BUT HER  
APOLOGIES  
ARE QUITE  
CLEARLY  
SINCERE...

I SYMPATHIZE  
WITH YOUR DESIRE  
TO ATTEMPT THE  
INTERVIEW IN THE  
BEST POSSIBLE  
CONDITION...

WHAT'RE  
YOU...?!



FINE!  
HAVE IT  
YOUR  
WAY!



HIS GRASP  
FEELS ALMOST  
GENTLE, BUT  
HIS ARM IS SO  
STIFF IT COULD  
BE MADE OF  
IRON!

MY  
WRIST  
DOESN'T  
HURT.

HOW  
CAN  
ANYONE  
BE THIS  
STRONG  
?!

FWAP  
FWAP  
FWAP

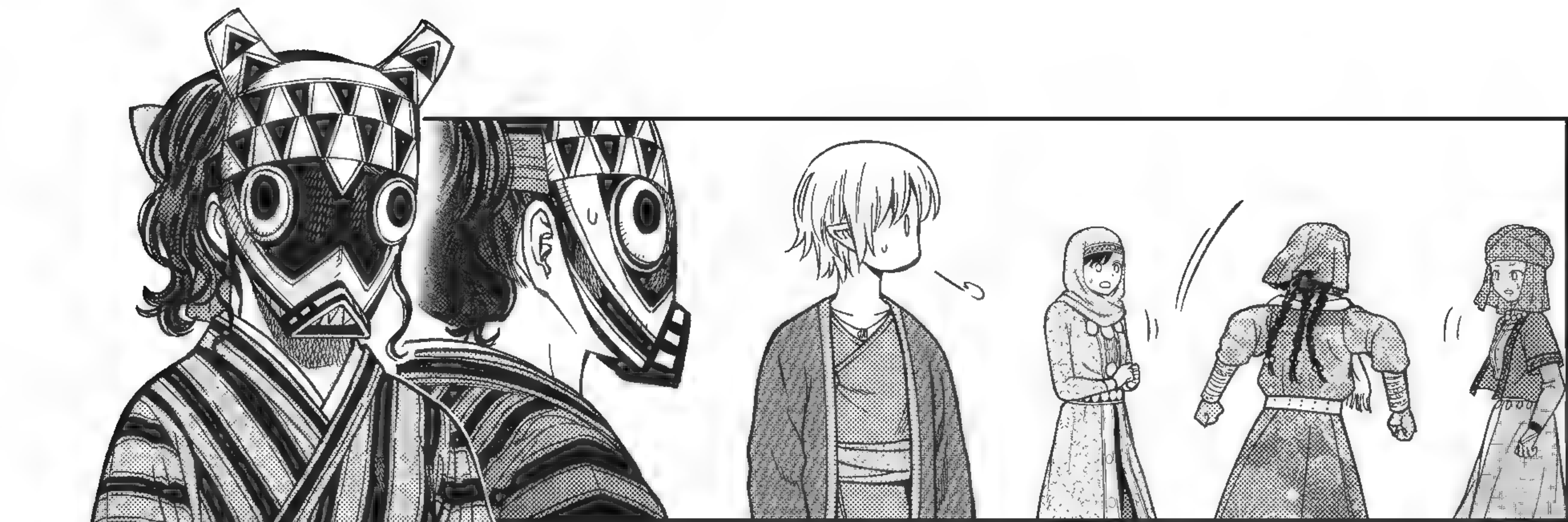
CLASP



THIS ISN'T  
ANY OF  
YOUR  
BUSINESS!

WHAT'S  
THIS  
KID'S  
DEAL?!





NO... SHE  
IS QUITE  
RIGHT TO  
BE UPSET.

QUITE THE  
ENCOUN-  
TER...



I AM  
SALA SEI  
SOHN.

BEG PARDON.  
I AM GRATEFUL  
FOR YOUR  
ASSISTANCE.



PLEASE  
PROCEED UP  
THE STAIRS AS  
YOUR NUMBER  
IS CALLED!

EXAMINEES  
NUMBER 50  
THROUGH  
59!

I'M IN  
THAT  
GROUP!

THAT'S  
ME!

BARRING  
CLOSE  
RELATIONSHIPS,  
THE KADOE  
REFER TO EACH  
OTHER BY  
SURNAME.

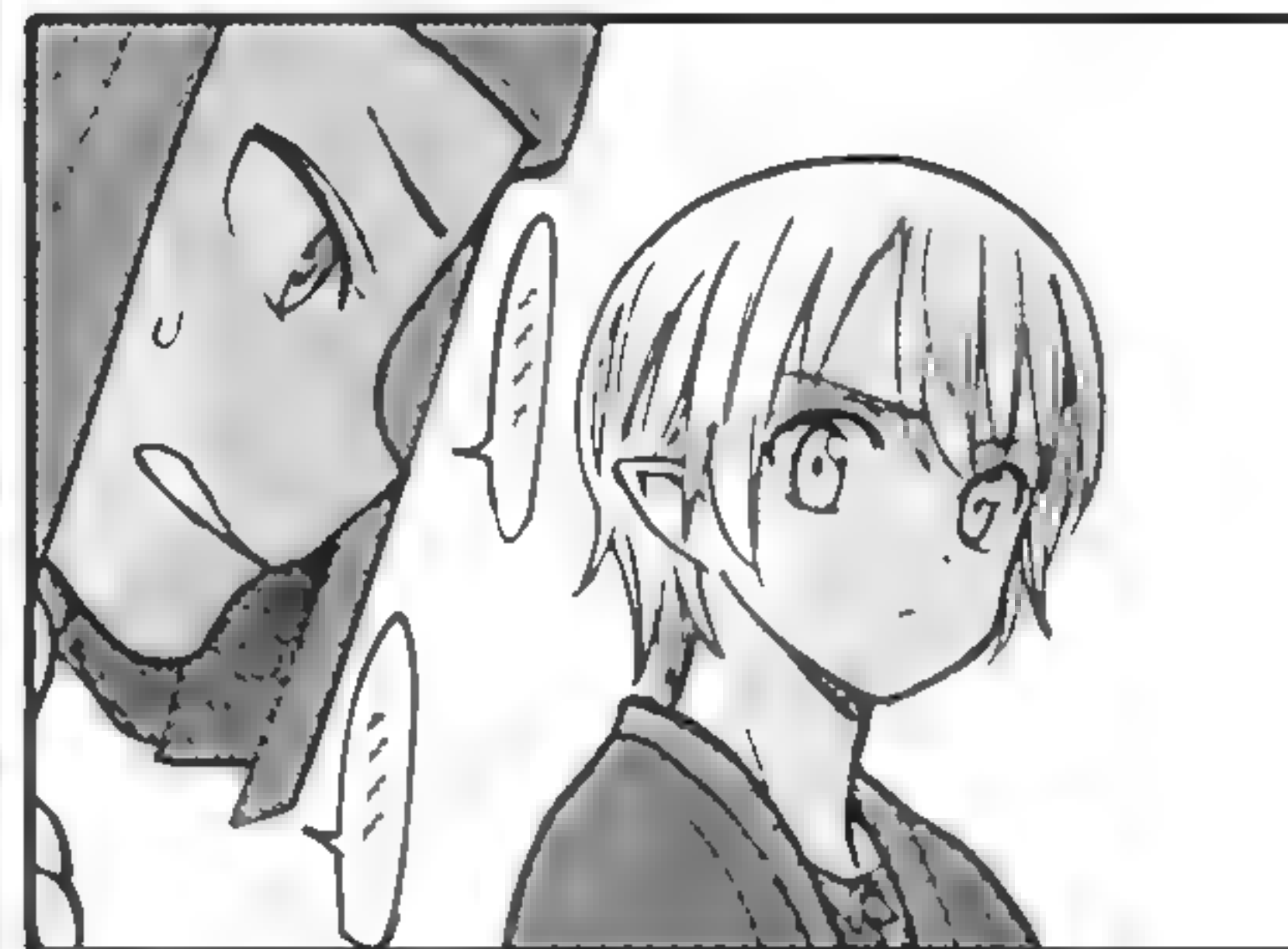
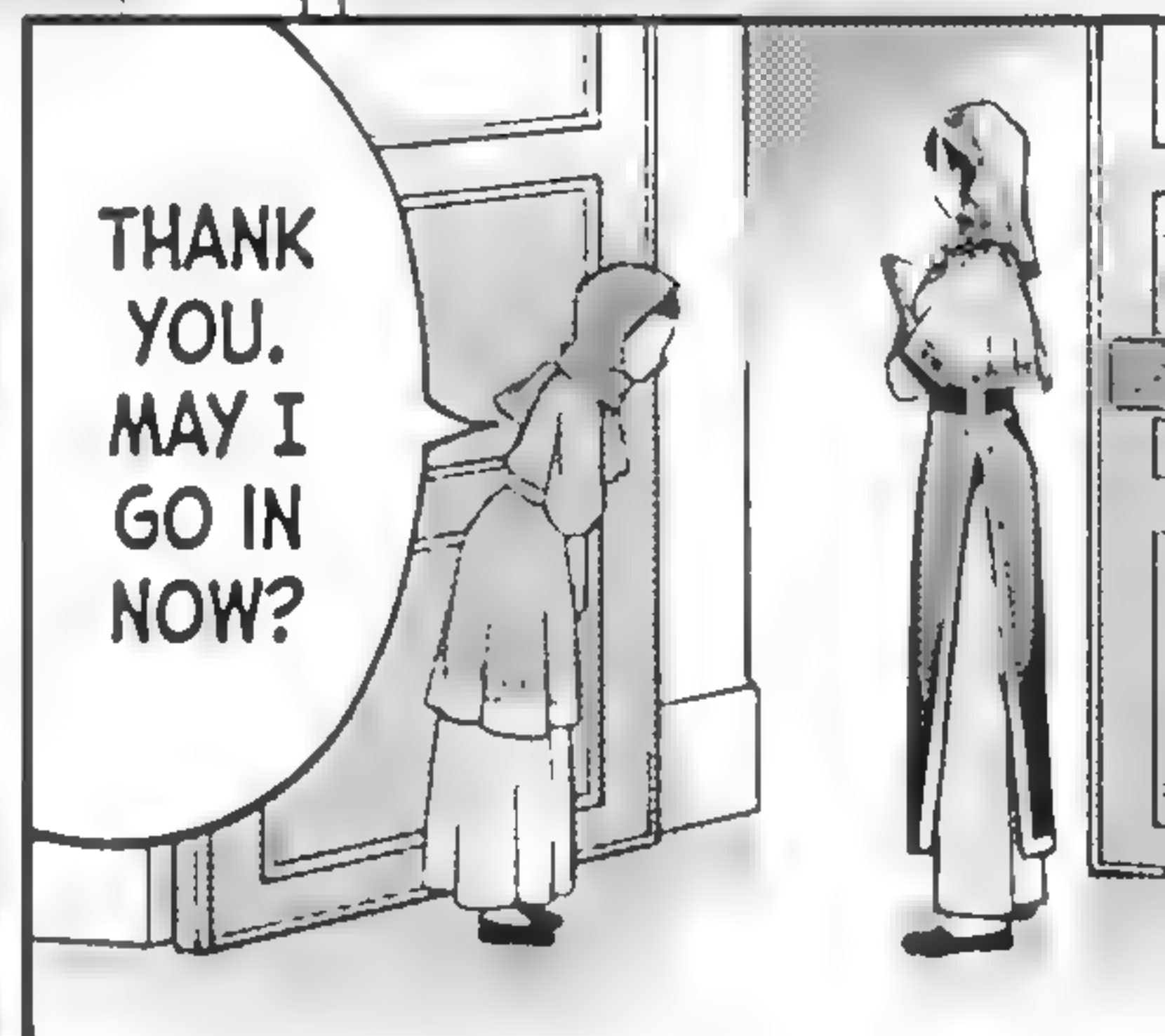
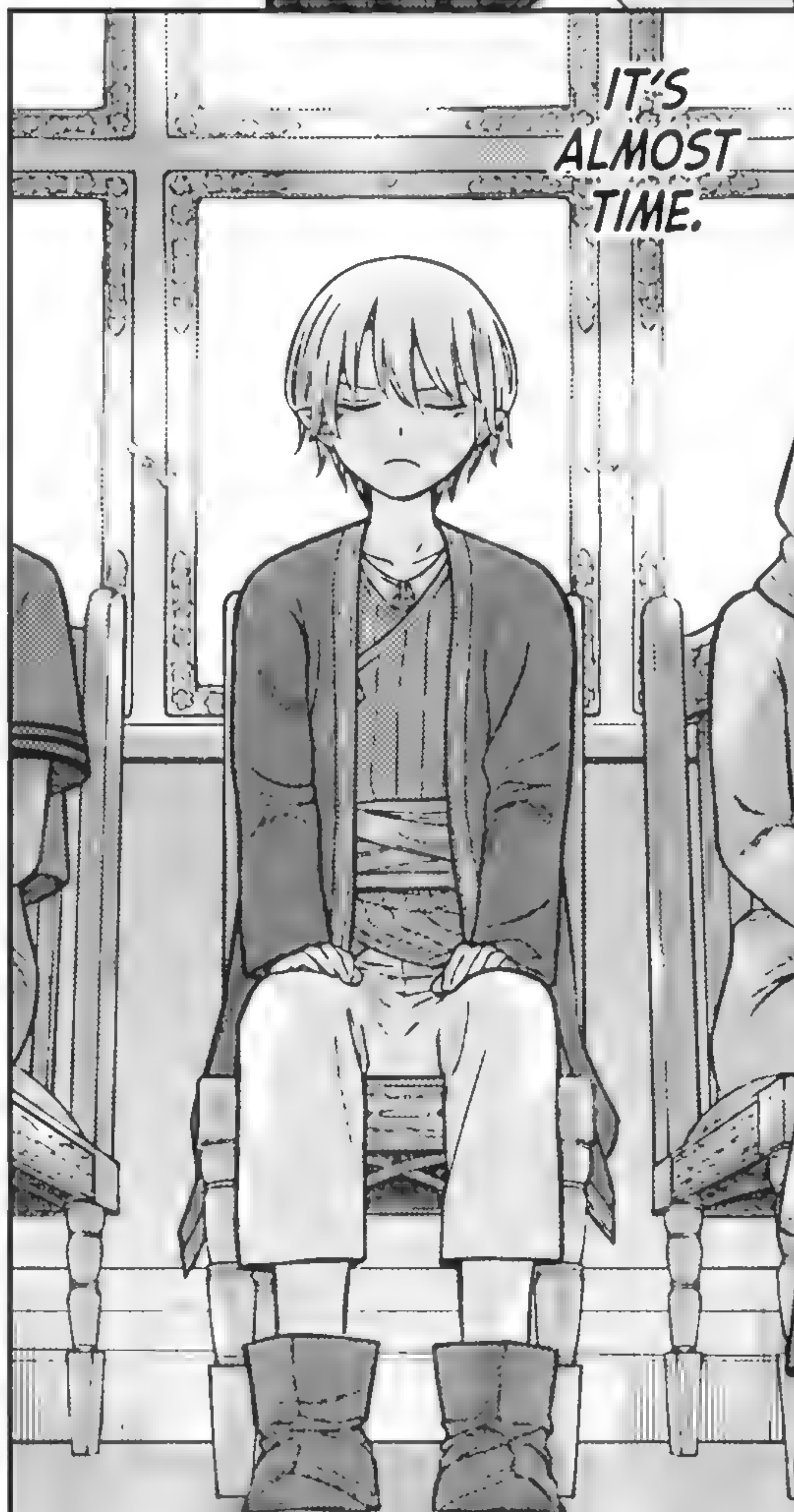
MY NAME  
IS THEO  
FUMIS.

AND  
YOU, SIR  
FUMIS.

NICE TO  
MEET  
YOU, MISS  
SOHN.

I, AS  
WELL!





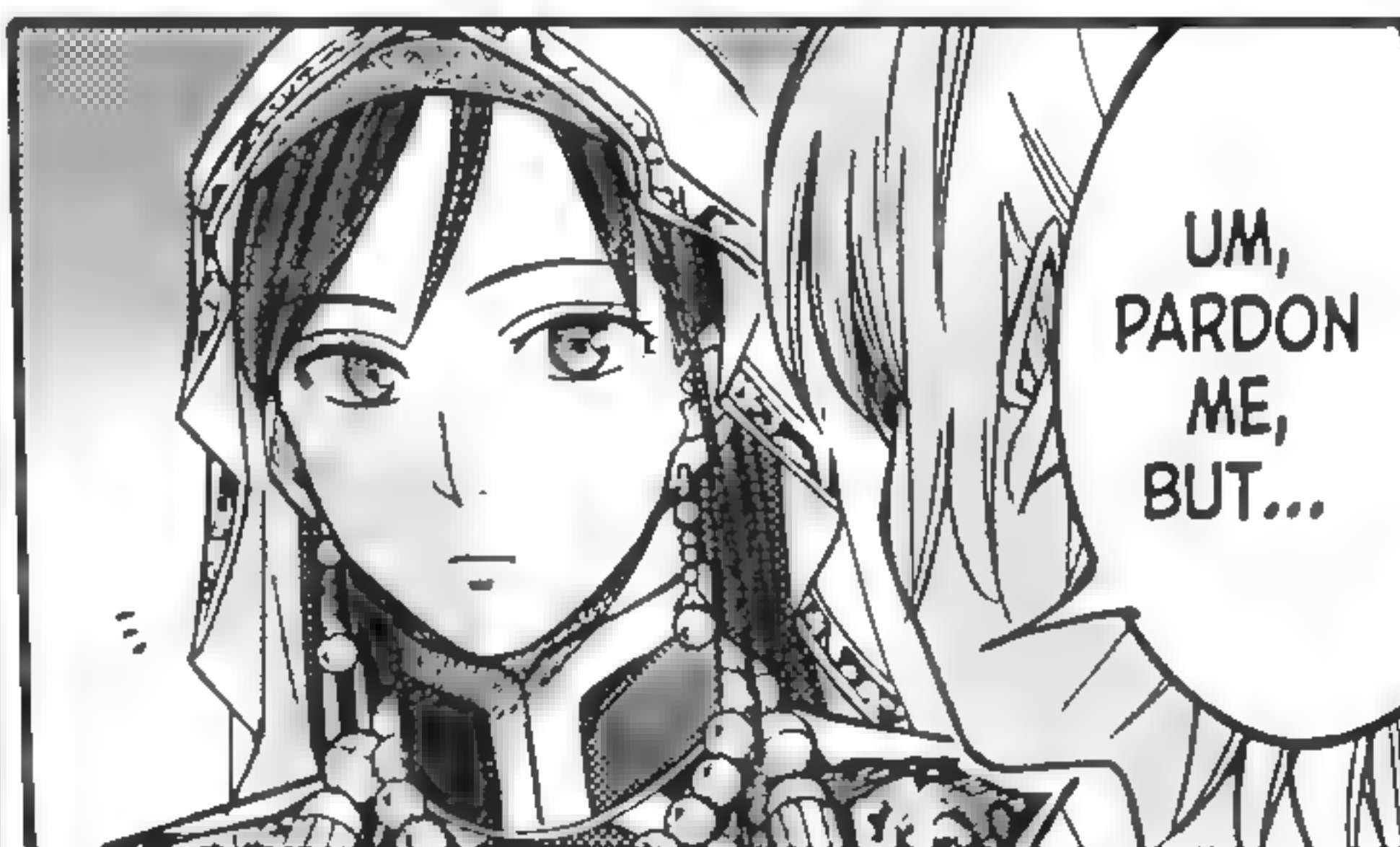
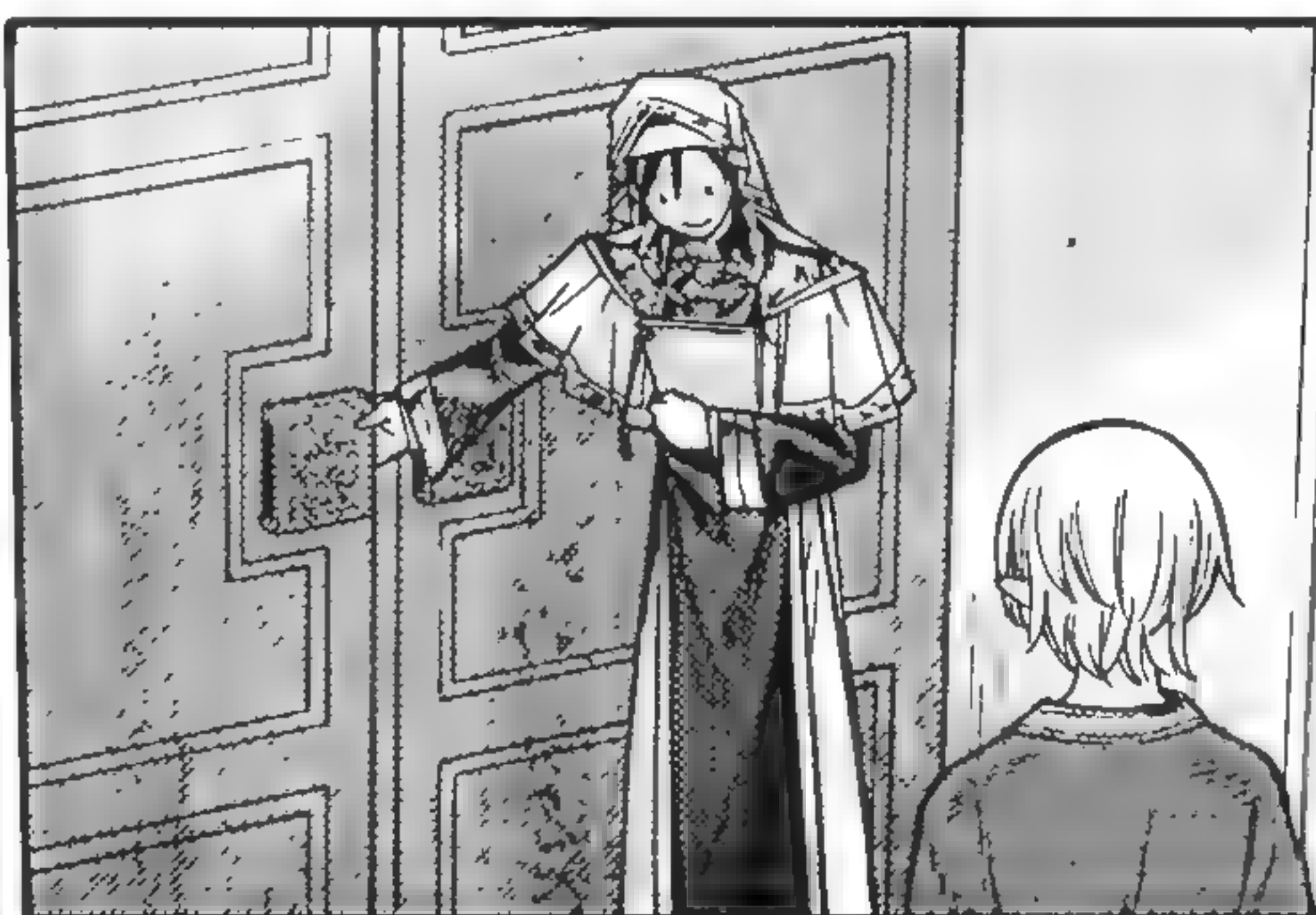


IF I WANT  
TO OPEN  
THE WAY  
TO THE  
FUTURE...

NEXT,  
PLEASE.

I PRACTICED  
ENDLESSLY  
FOR THIS  
PART WITH  
SAKIYA.

I MIGHT BE AT A  
DISADVANTAGE IN  
MY STUDIES, BUT  
HERE, I CAN BE ON  
EQUAL FOOTING  
WITH EVERYONE  
ELSE.



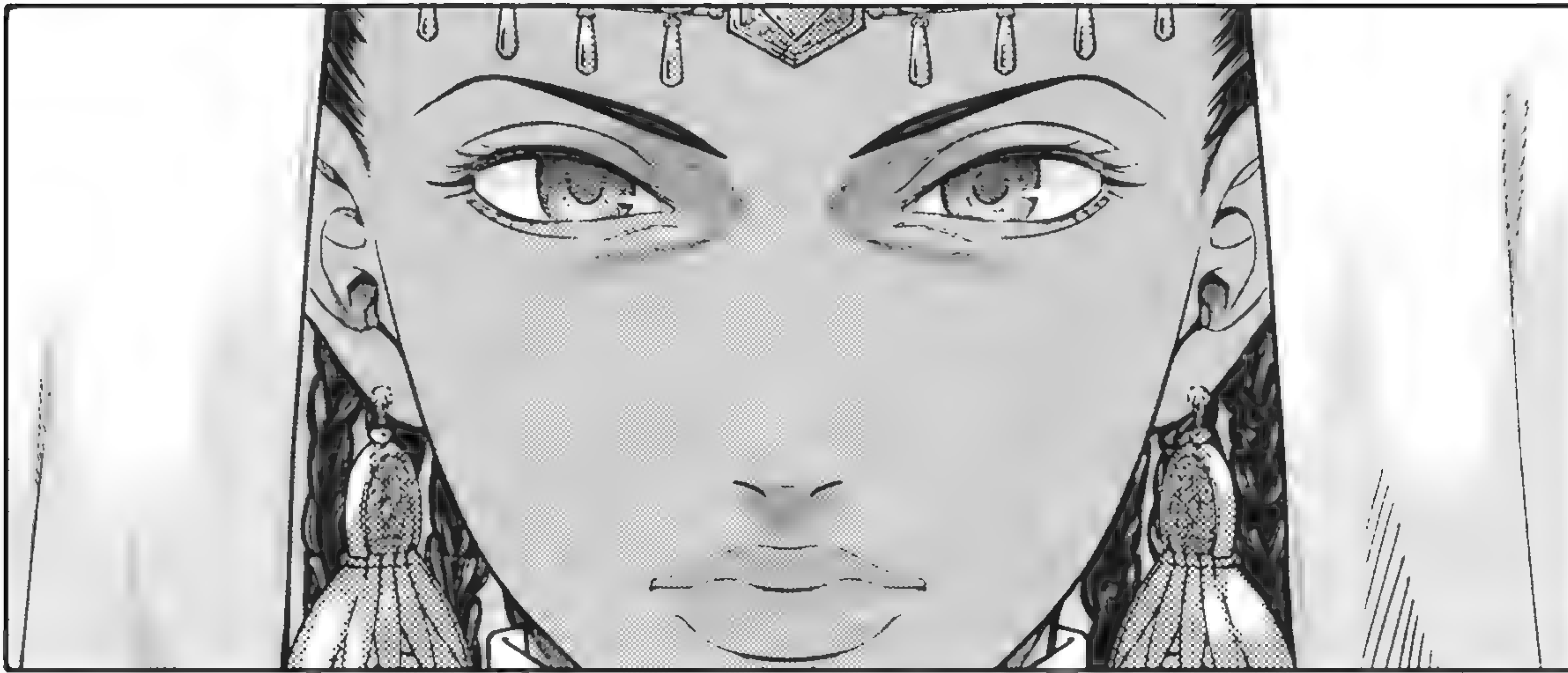
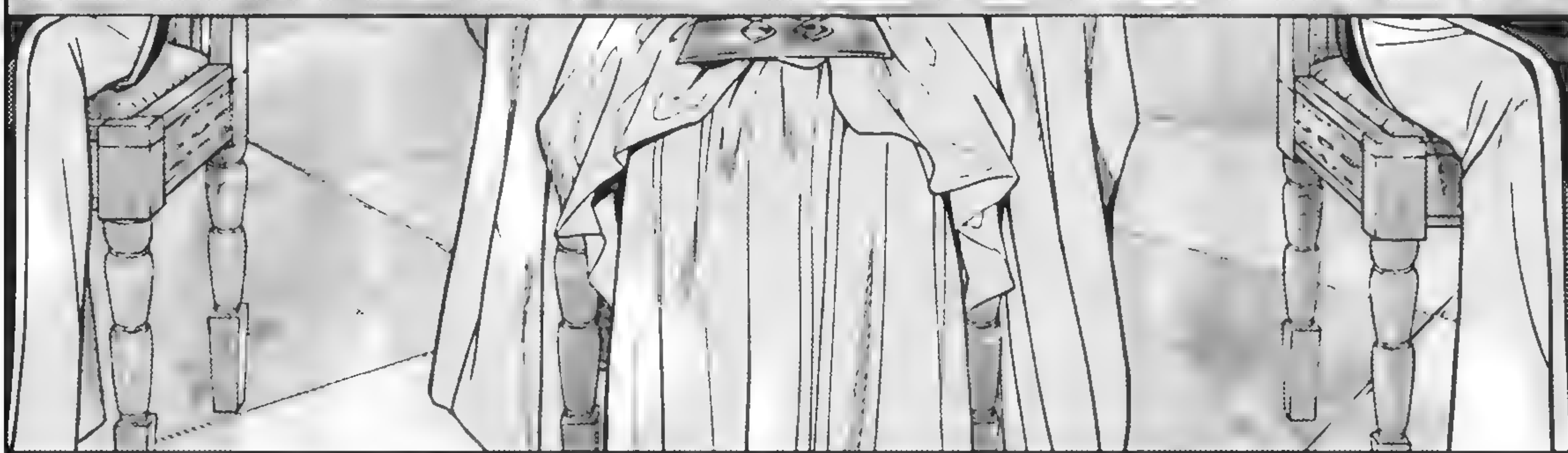
KRRNK...

...I HAVE  
TO REACH  
OUT WITH  
MY OWN  
HAND!

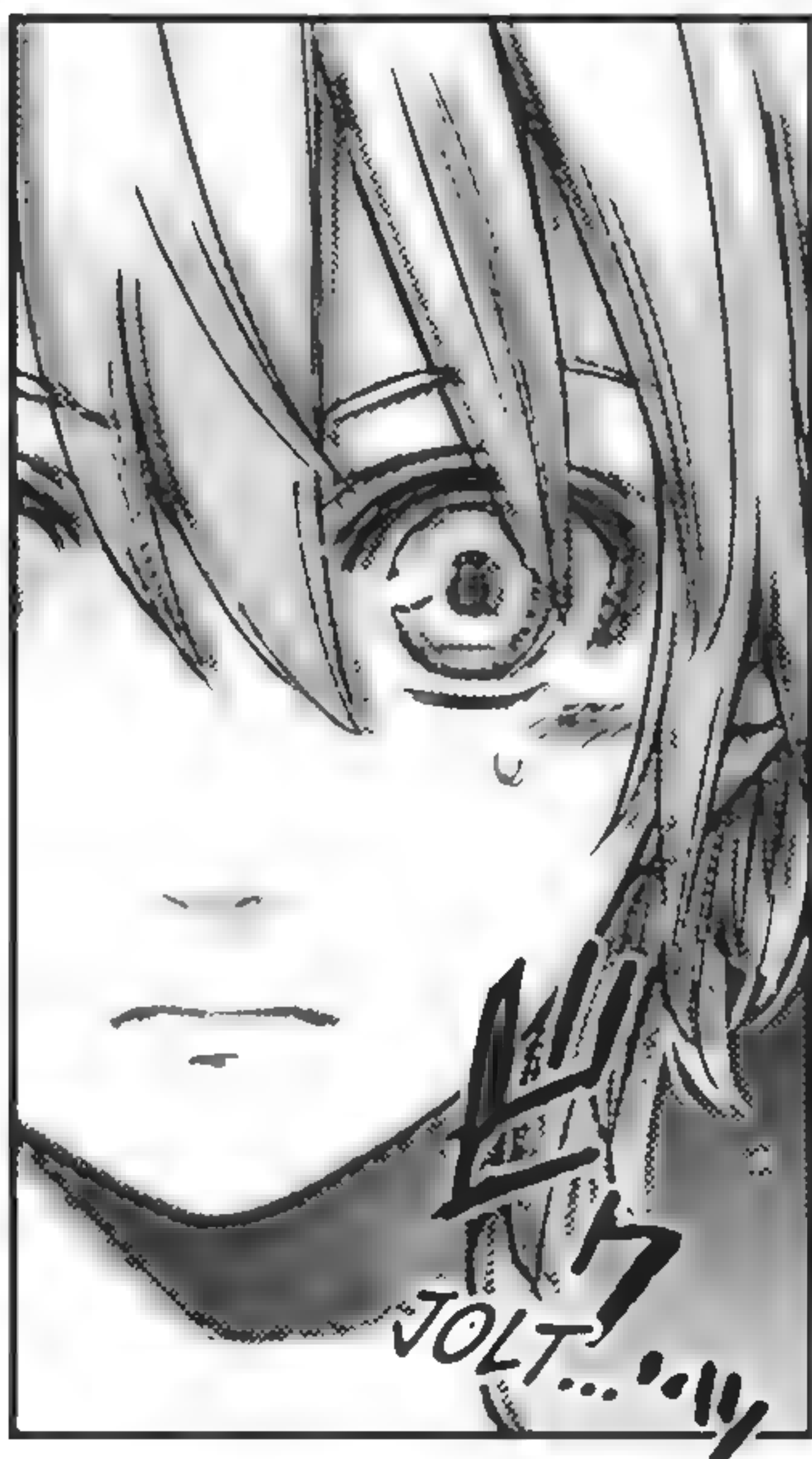




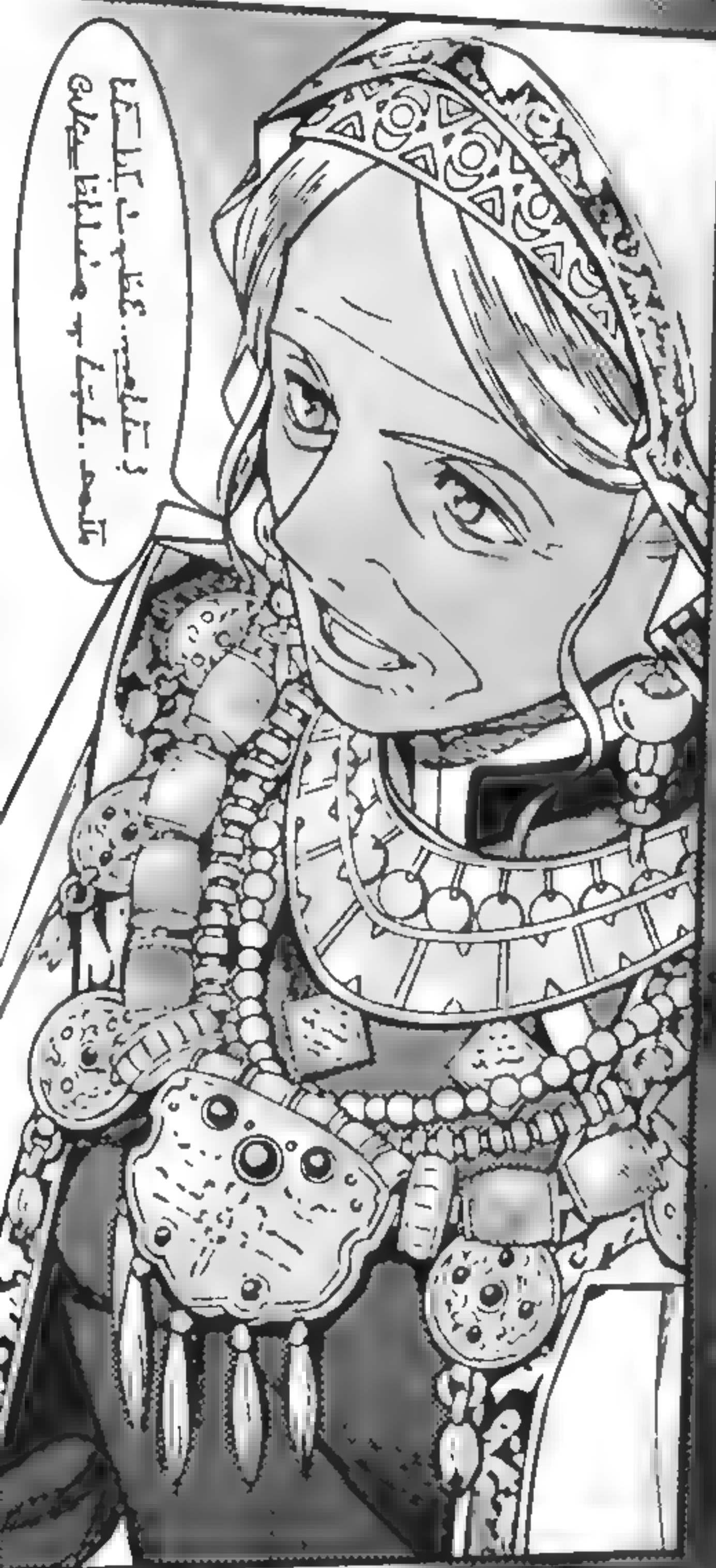




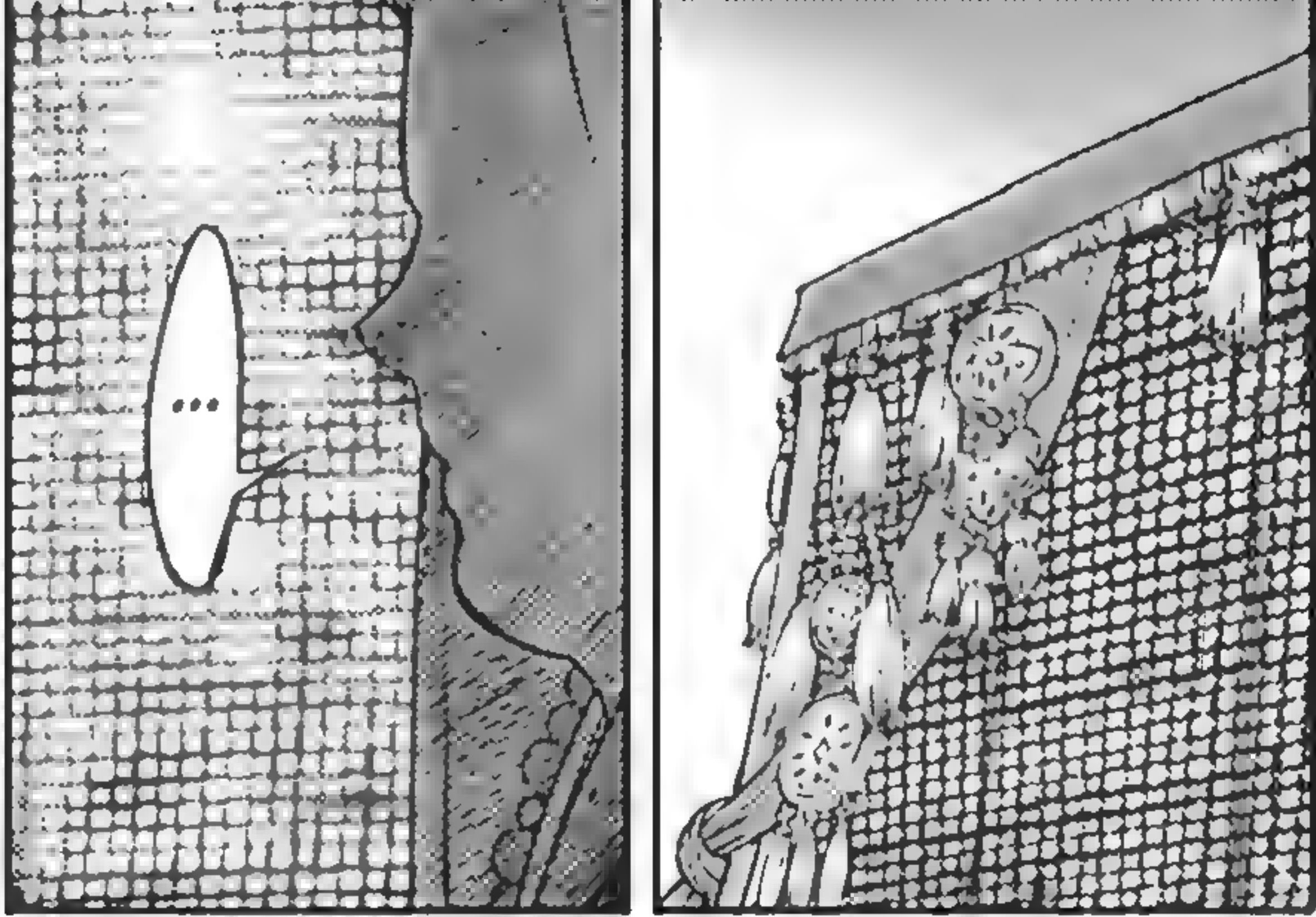








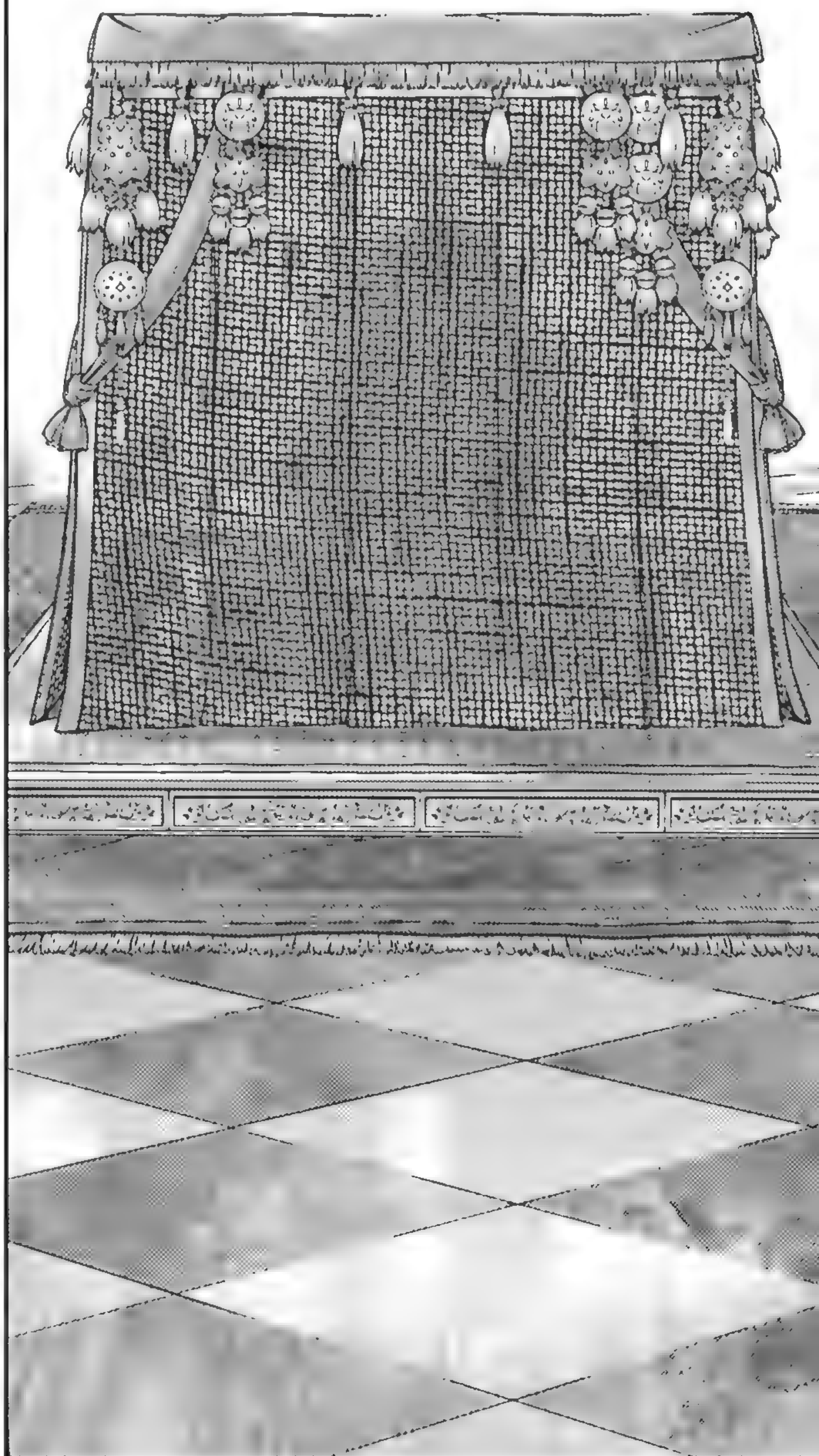




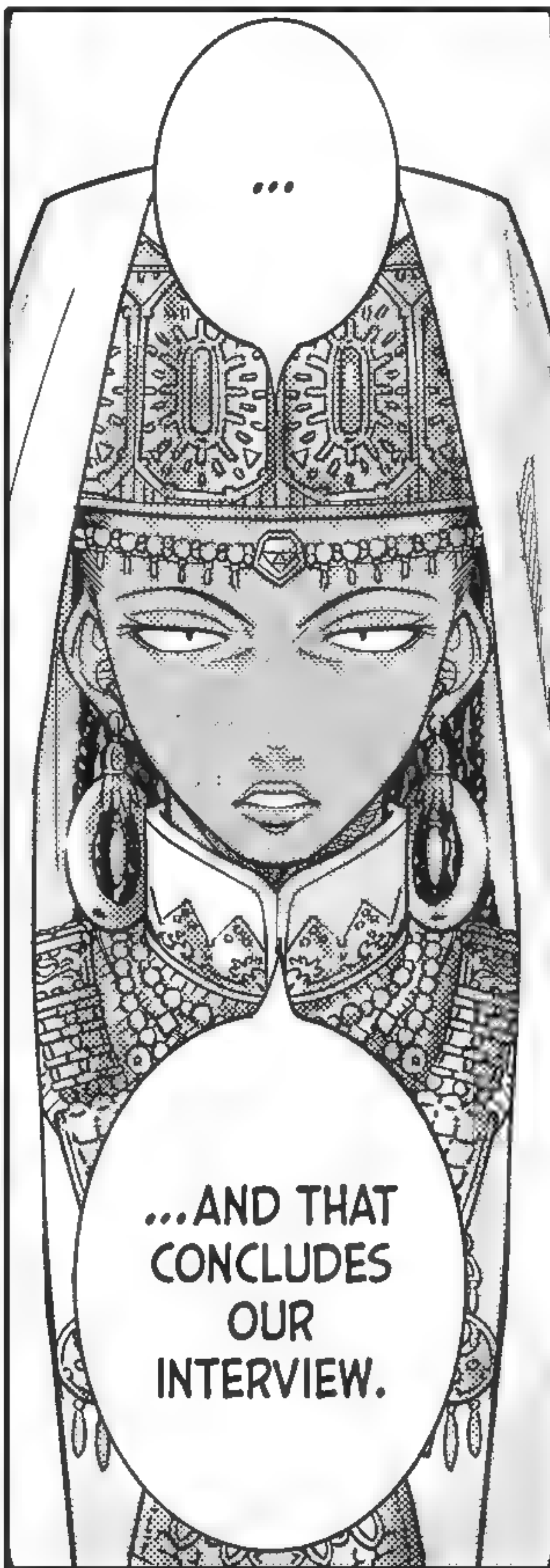
LIFT...



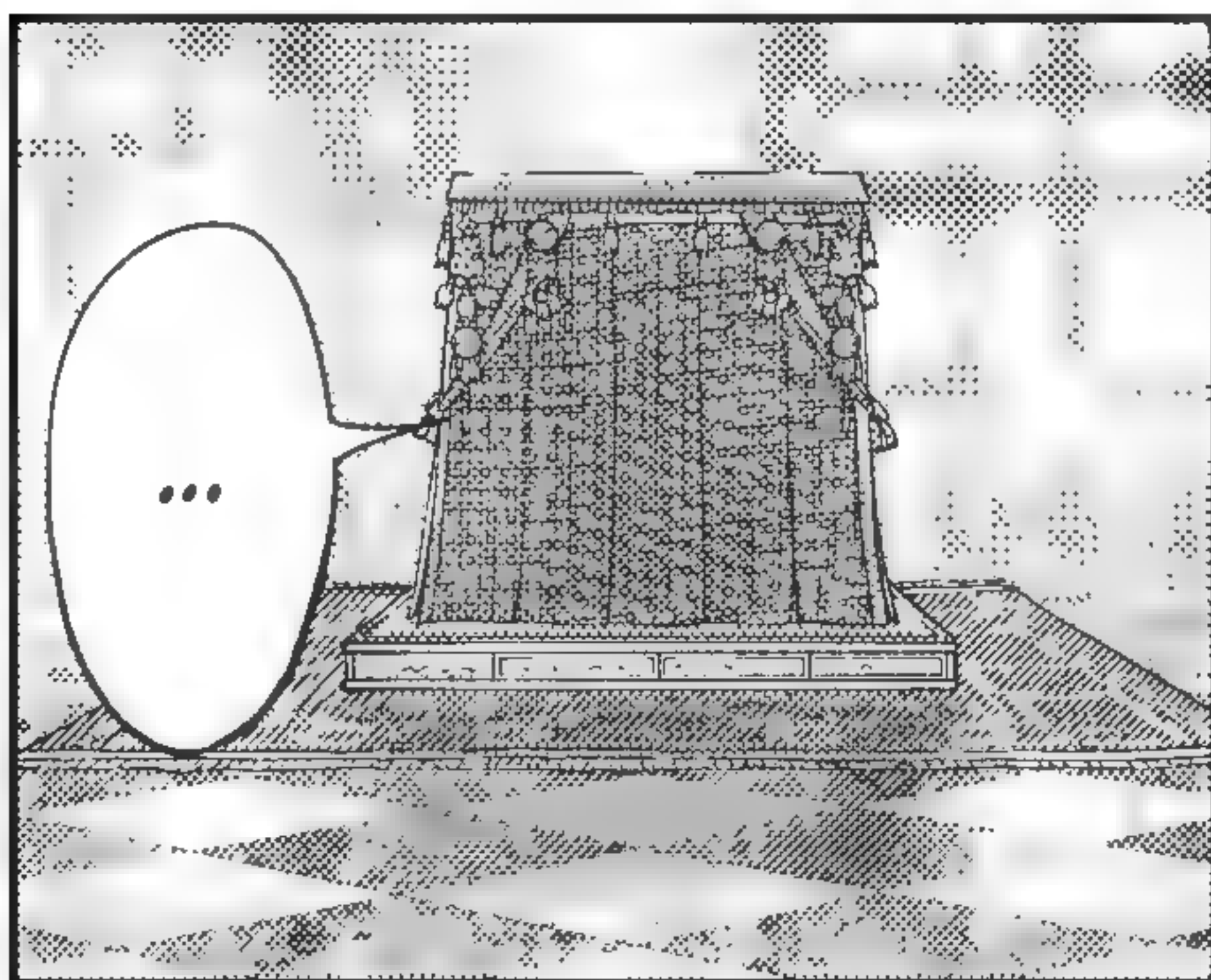
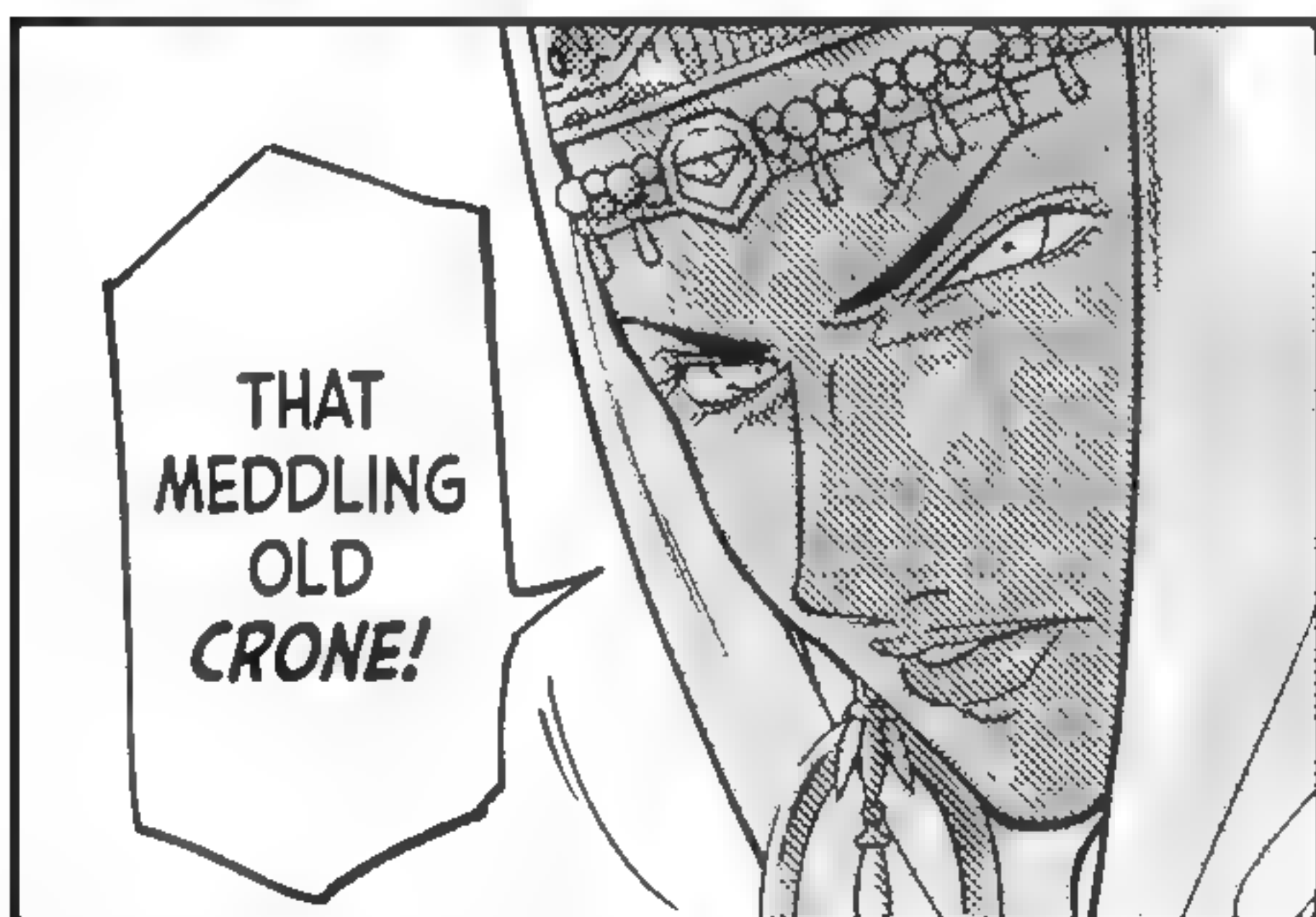
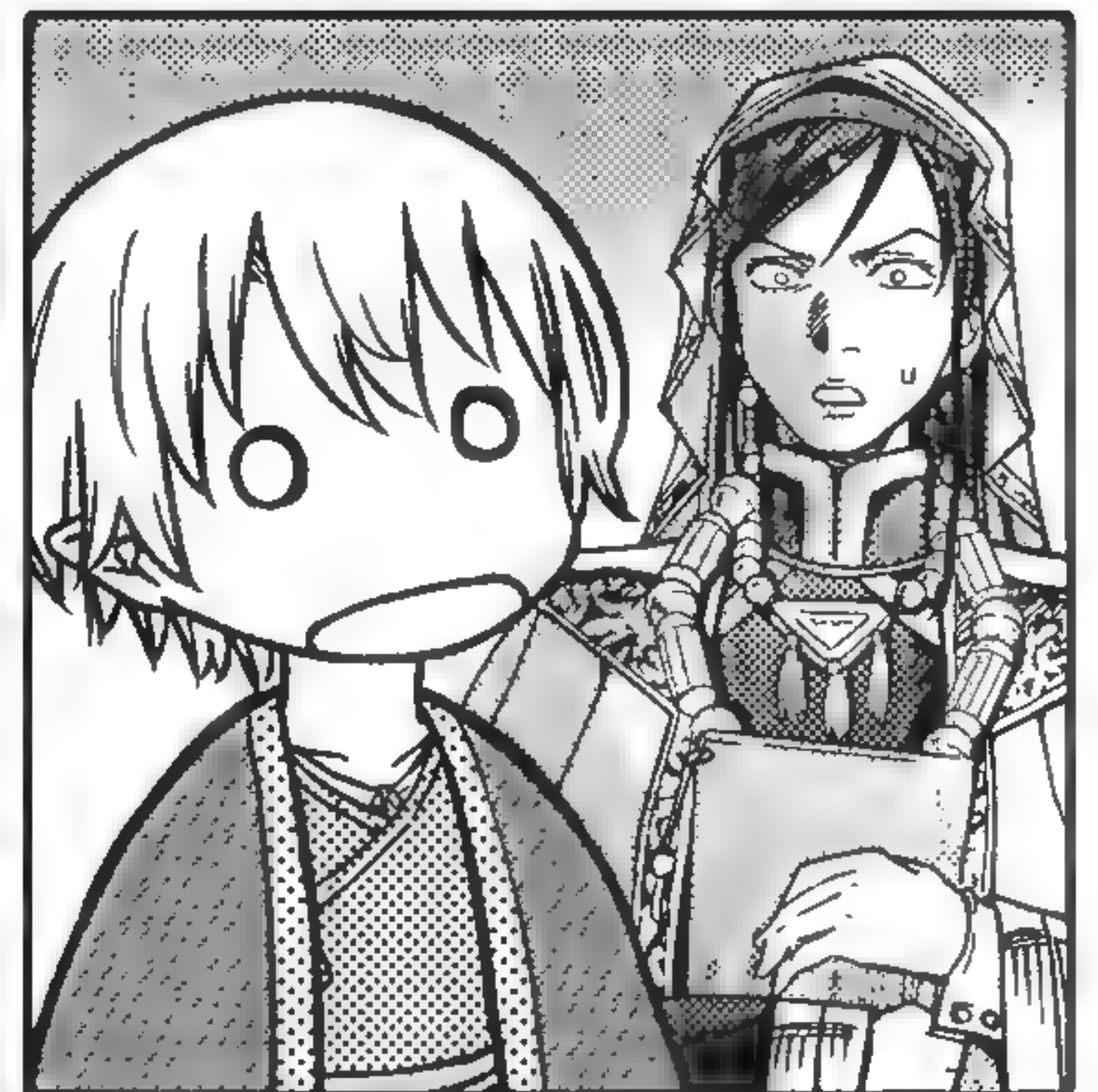
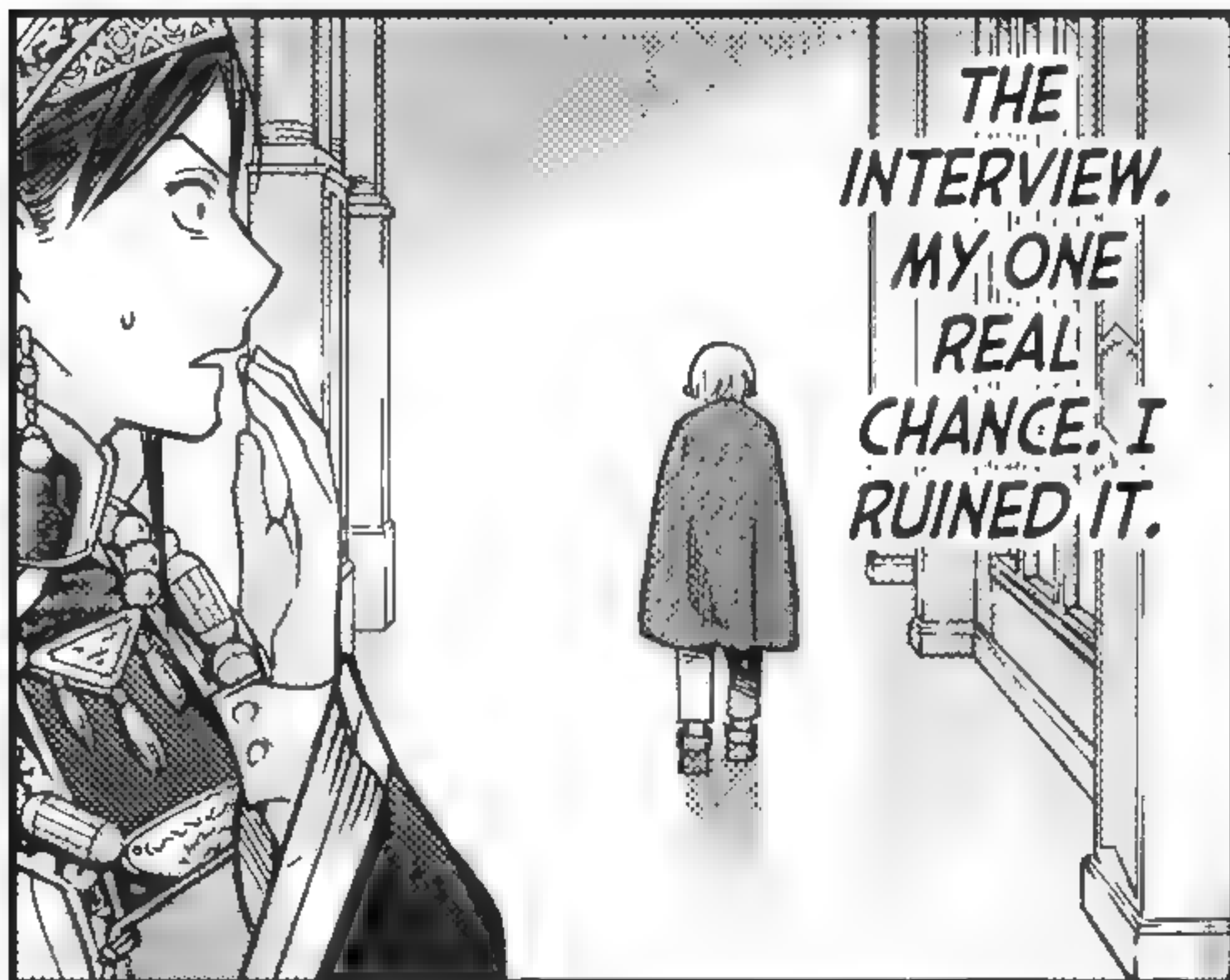
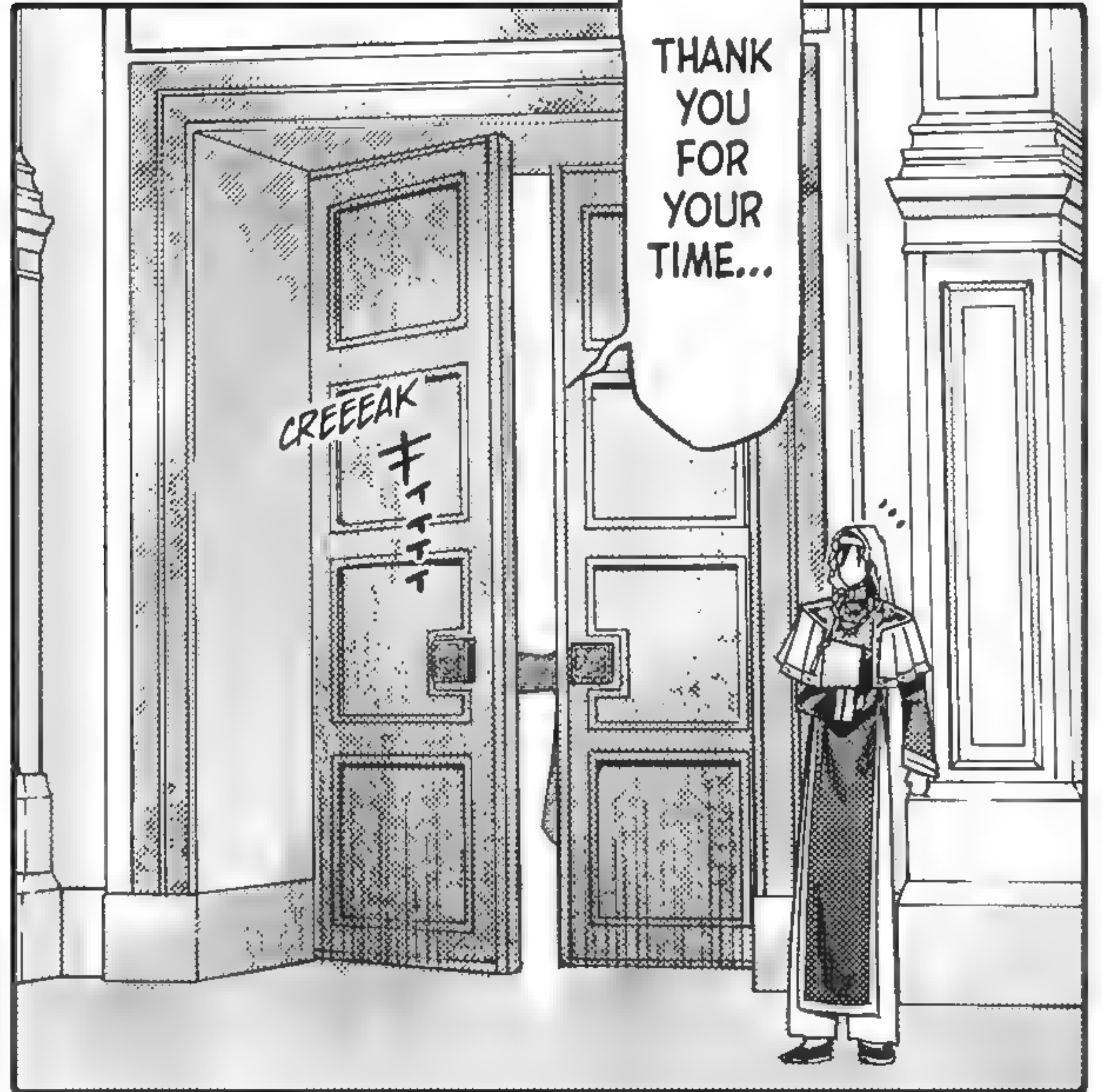
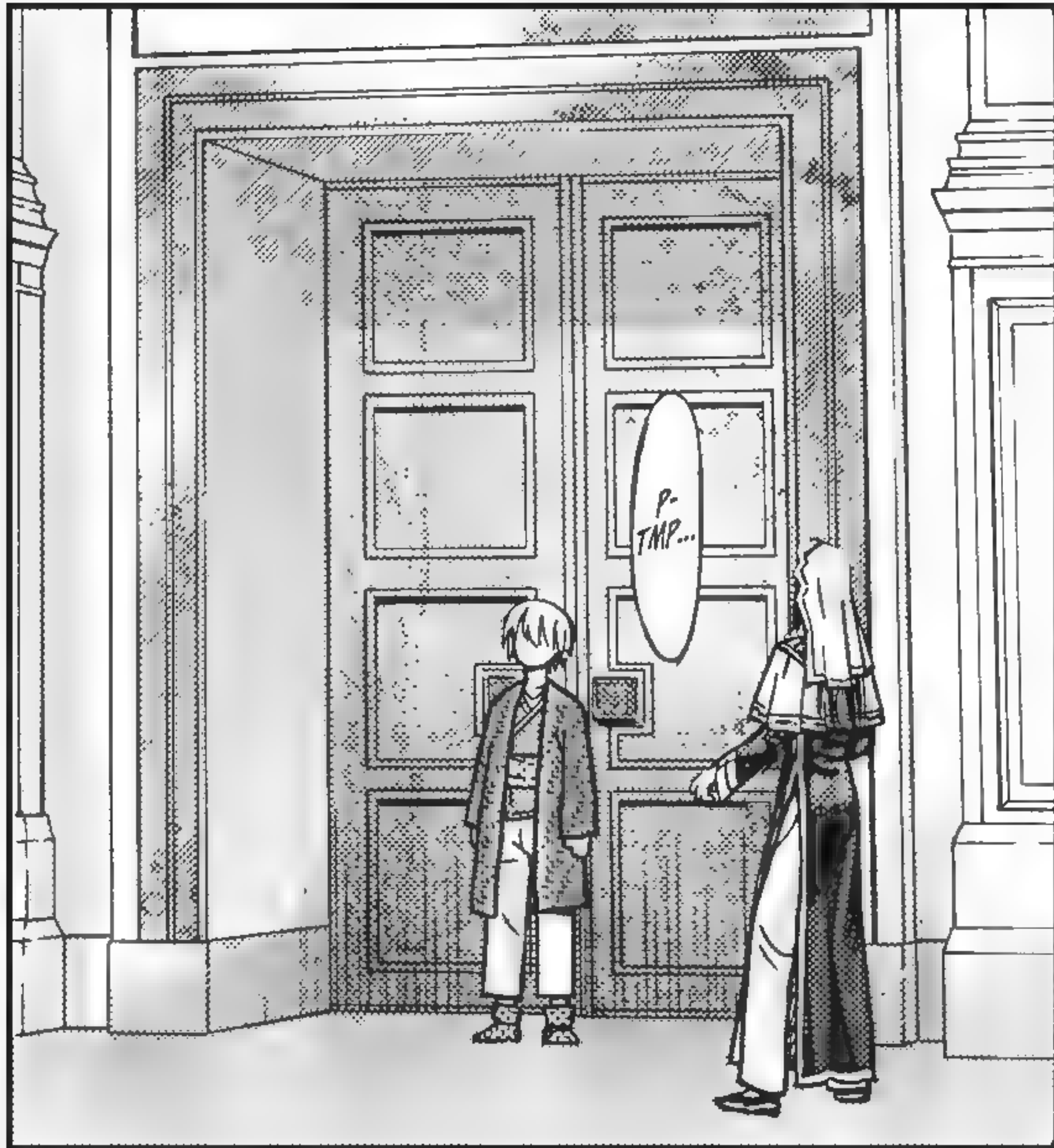
FEELS LIKE  
SOMEONE'S  
IN THERE.















CHEEP  
CHEEP



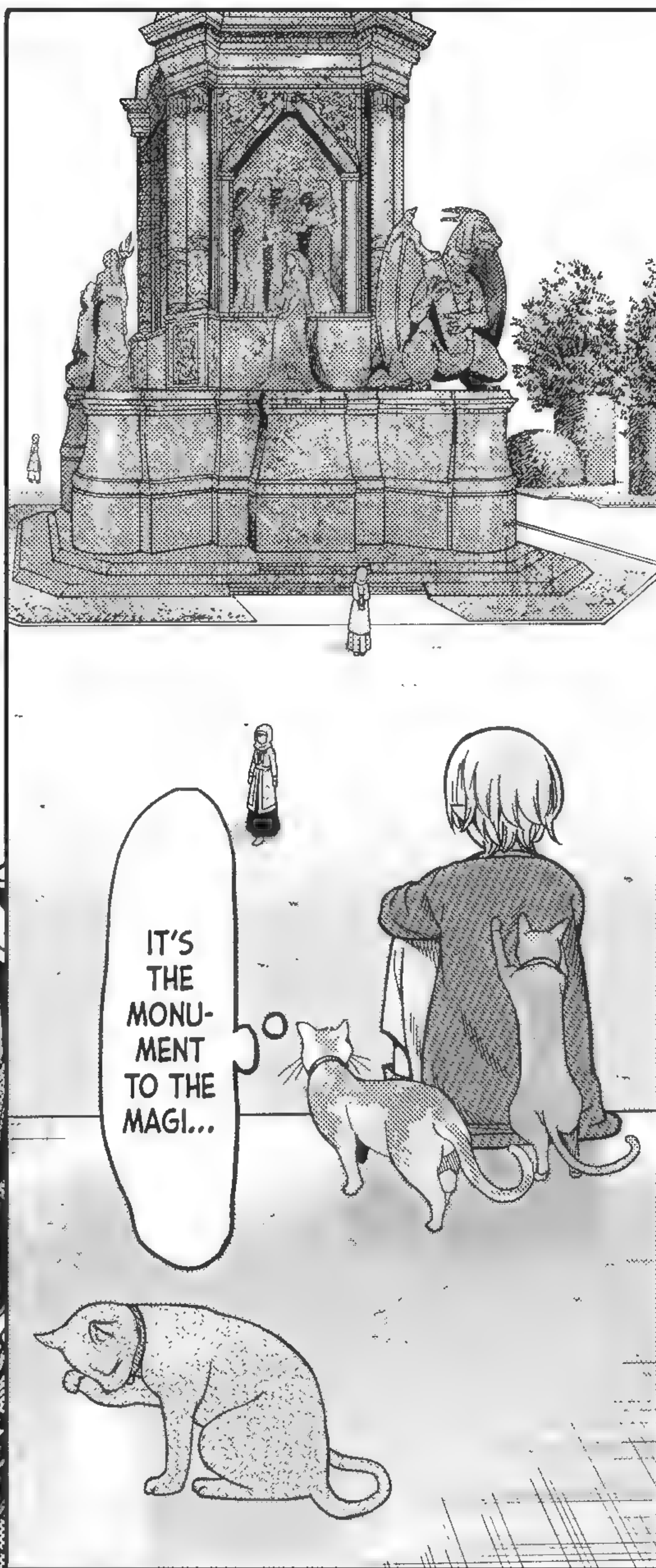
...BUT I,  
THEO FUMIS,  
HAVE ONLY  
FAILED TO  
REALIZE MY  
DREAMS.

I'M  
SORRY,  
GREAT  
MAGI. YOU  
SAVED THE  
WORLD...



SIR  
FUMIS?

HAAAH...



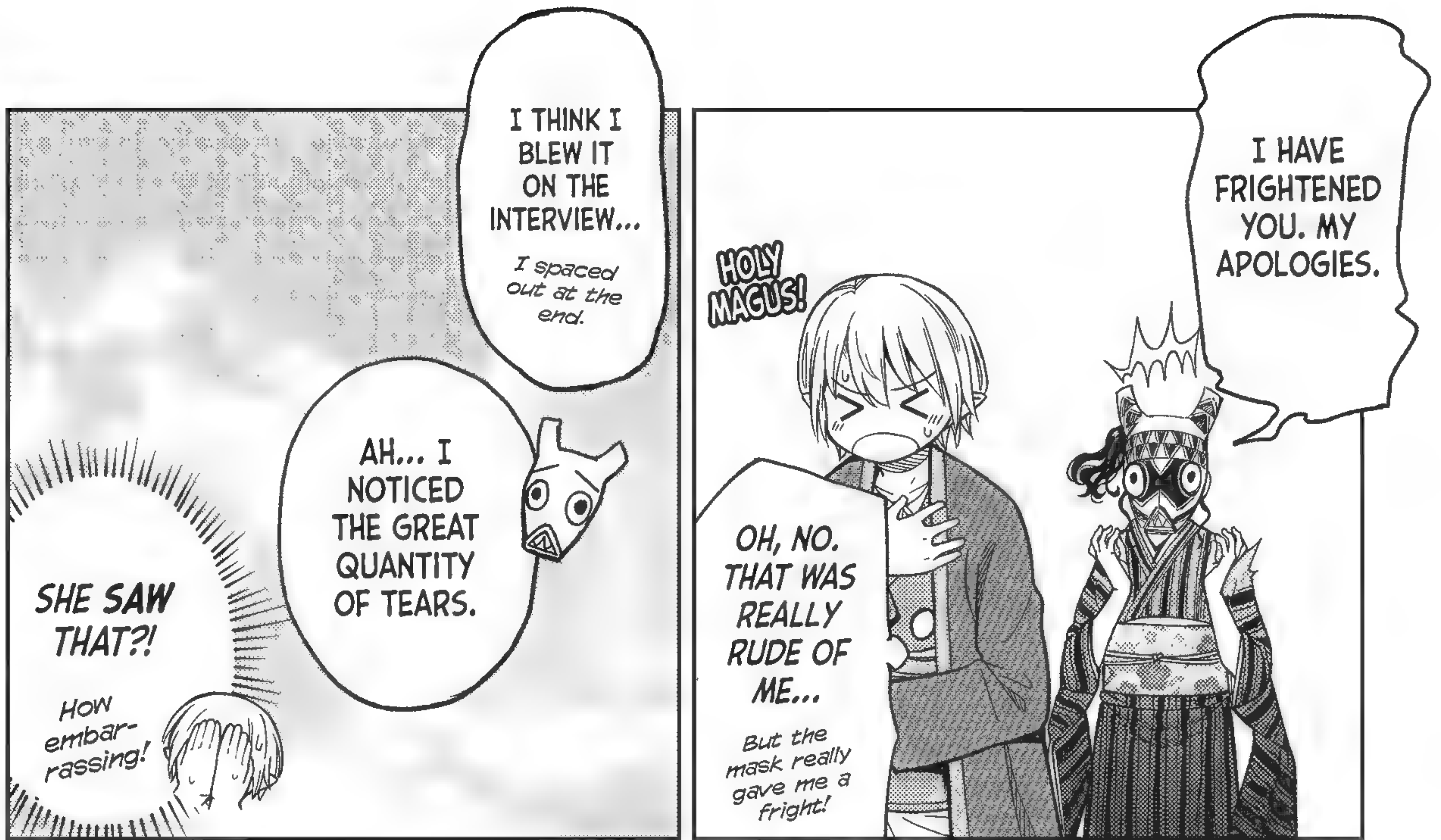
IT'S  
THE  
MONU-  
MENT  
TO THE  
MAGI...

FEELP!

LOOON...

7  
7  
7

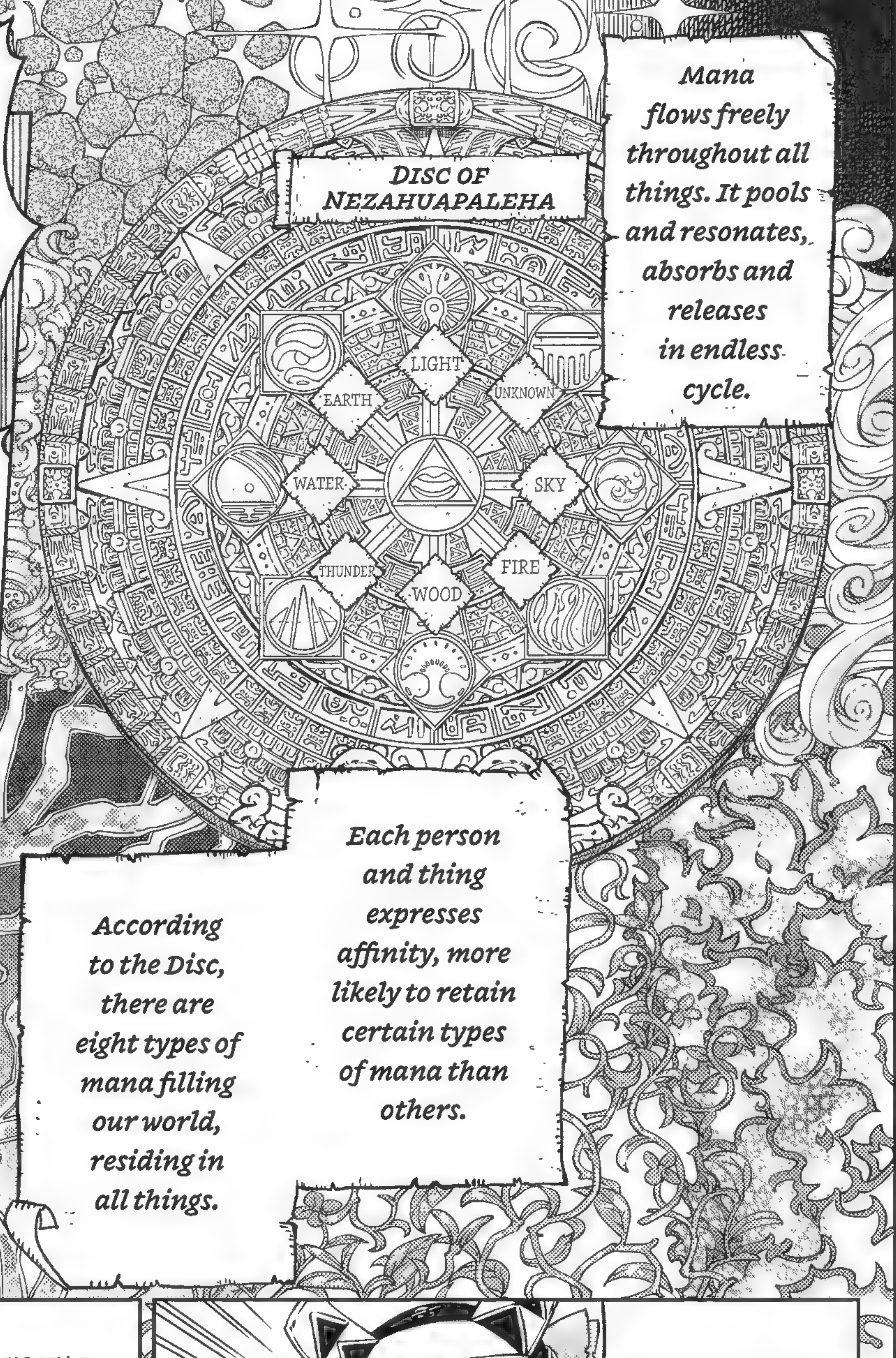






Mana flows freely throughout all things. It pools and resonates, absorbs and releases in endless cycle.

DISC OF NEZAHUAPALEHA



IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, THE STRESS OF THE INTERVIEW CAME ACROSS AS *DANGER*, AND YOUR MANA CAME FLOWING OUT!

BEING WATER-ATTUNED, IT QUICKLY DISSOLVED INTO THE FLUIDS OF YOUR BODY...

...AND WAS THEN EXPELLED IN THE FORM OF TEARS!

AND THE VOLUME OF TEARS ATTESTS TO THE INTENSITY OF YOUR MANA.

IS THAT GOING TO HAPPEN EVERY TIME I'M NERVOUS?!

According to the Disc, there are eight types of mana filling our world, residing in all things.

Each person and thing expresses affinity, more likely to retain certain types of mana than others.

FIRST! I ASSUME YOU ARE PRONE TO FREQUENT SWEATING!

MY APOLOGIES FOR THE OUTBURST. I AM QUITE PASSIONATE ABOUT MAGIC AND ENDEAVOR TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT MANA EACH DAY.

IF IT IS NOT AN INCONVENIENCE, I SHOULD LIKE YOUR HELP IN ASCERTAINING THE ACCURACY OF MY PAST FINDINGS.

NEXT! IT TOOK YOU QUITE SOME TIME TO STOP WETTING THE BED!

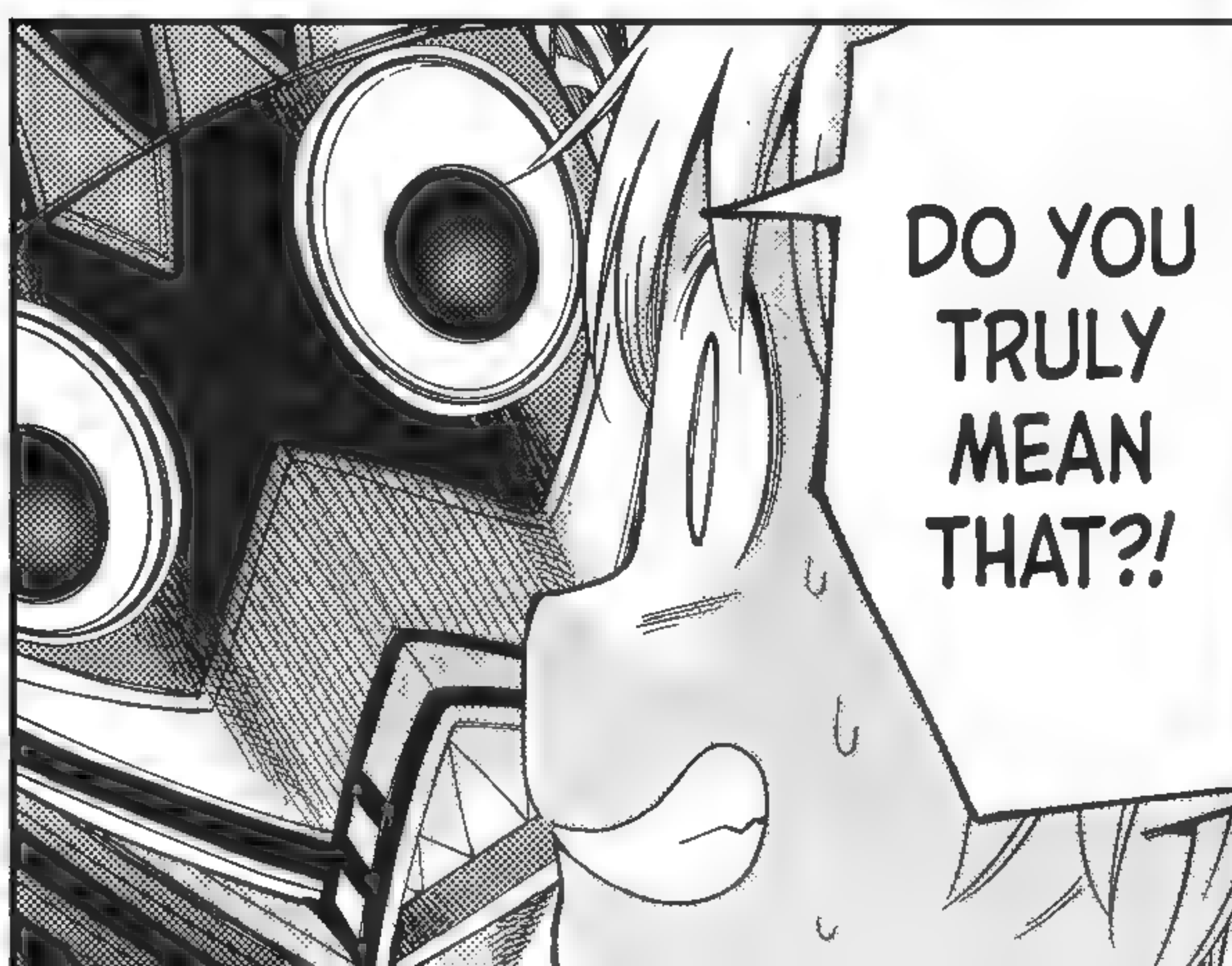
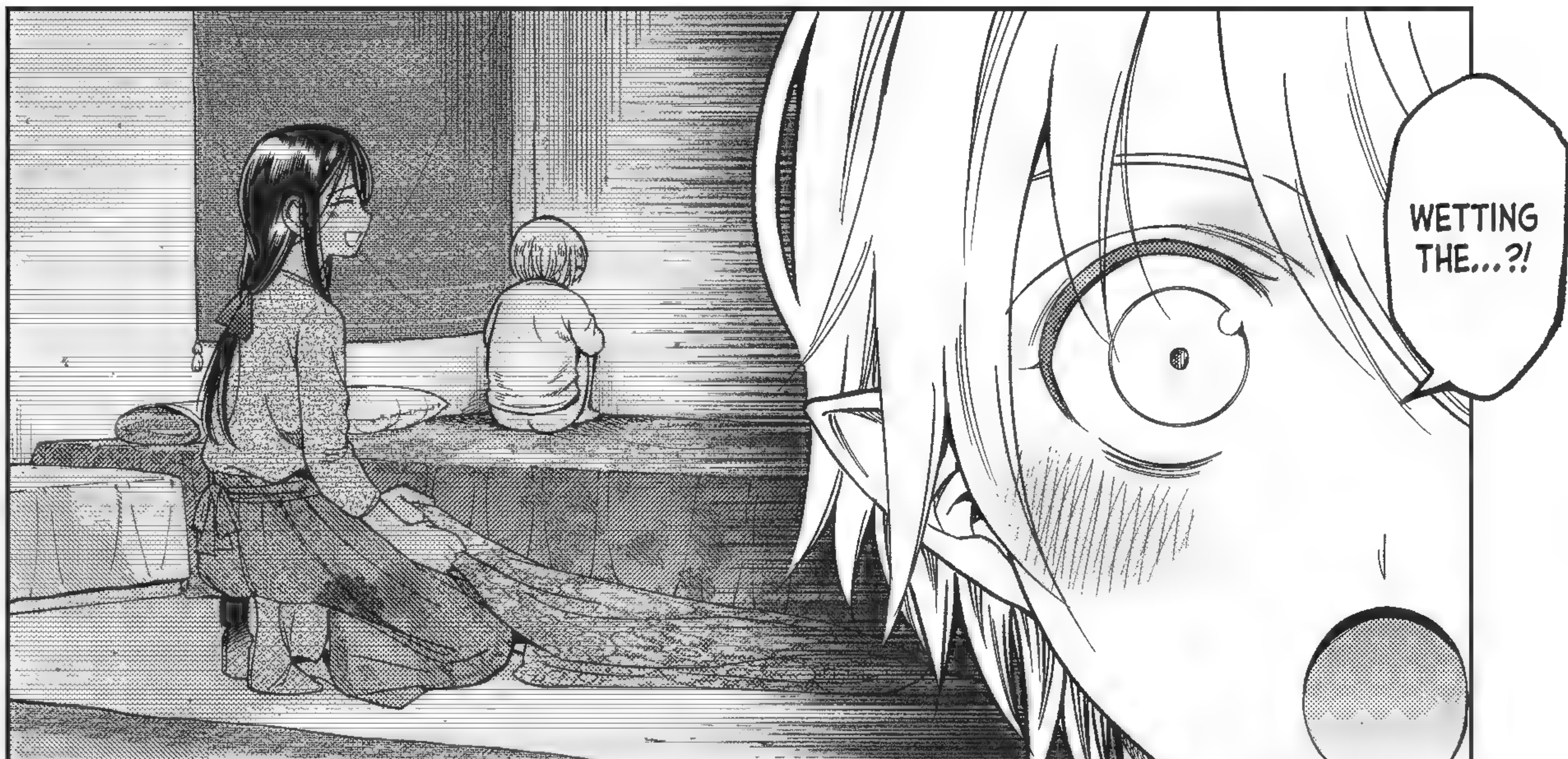
A POINT FOR ME!

YES! I AM!

I sweat so easily.

Really passionate.














ON OBSERVING  
THE DANCING  
FLAMES, GUIDED  
BY THE MAGUS'  
HANDS AS IF  
ALIVE, I WAS  
CAPTIVATED!

WHEN I WAS  
QUITE YOUNG,  
I ATTENDED A  
PERFORMANCE  
BY A TROUPE OF  
ENTERTAINERS  
FROM ONE OF  
THE OTHER  
REGIONS.

AMONG THEIR  
MEMBERS WAS  
A MAGUS WHO  
WIELDED FIRE!

GASP



I DON'T SEE  
ANYTHING  
WRONG  
WITH IT!




HE SAYS  
THAT A  
WOMAN WHO  
PRATTLES  
WILL NEVER  
FIND A  
GROOM.


MY FATHER  
WARNS ME  
ABOUT MY  
DISPLAYS OF  
FERVOR.

I HAVE  
DONE IT  
AGAIN.

BLUSH



YOU  
DO...?



WHEN I  
SMILE, THE  
SPACE ABOVE  
MY UPPER  
LIP IS SO  
UNPLEASANTLY  
PROMINENT!

OH, DEAR!  
PLEASE  
LOOK  
AWAY!

DON'T  
WORRY. I  
CAN'T SEE  
IT, YOU  
KNOW.



...VERY  
CHARMING WHEN  
SOMEONE TALKS  
ABOUT HER  
PASSIONS!

I THINK  
IT'S...



HOWEVER,  
GIVEN MY  
URBAN  
UPBRINGING,  
I AM AFRAID  
MY MANA IS  
NOT VERY  
PROFUSE.

PAD...

HAD I BEEN  
BORN A BOY,  
I MIGHT HAVE  
CONSIDERED AN  
APPRENTICE-  
SHIP.

PAD...

PAD

ONE CANNOT  
FOSTER GREAT  
RESERVES OF  
MANA WITHOUT  
EXPOSURE TO  
UNSULLIED  
NATURE.

WHAT  
DOES  
THAT HAVE  
TO DO  
WITH IT?

IF YOU LIKE  
MAGIC SO  
MUCH, DIDN'T  
YOU EVER  
THINK OF  
BECOMING A  
MAGUS?

JUST AS IN MY  
ANALYSIS NOW—  
OUR ELEMENTS  
ALREADY PRESENT  
AS QUITE  
MINOR PHYSICAL  
DIFFERENCES.

HFF...

ONE TREATISE  
POSITS THAT THE MORE  
DEVELOPED AND  
CONVENIENT CIVILIZED  
LIFE BECOMES, THE LESS  
MANA PEOPLE RETAIN,  
UNTIL THE AMOUNT IS  
SO SMALL IT'S ALMOST  
IMPOSSIBLE TO DETECT  
SOMEONE'S ELEMENT.

I SUSPECT  
YOU MUST  
HAVE GROWN  
UP IN CLOSE  
PROXIMITY  
TO THE  
WILD.

PAD...

SO, I AM  
FORCED TO  
CONCLUDE THAT  
THERE IS NO  
PLACE FOR MAGI  
IN THE PEACEFUL  
FUTURE  
ENVISIONED BY  
THE CENTRAL  
LIBRARY.

REGIONAL  
LIBRARIES CARRY  
A FEW REFER-  
ENCES ON MANA,  
BUT NEVER ANY  
MATERIAL ABOUT  
SPELLCASTING.

PAD...

PERHAPS,  
QUITE  
FRANKLY,  
THERE IS NO  
NEED FOR  
MAGI IN OUR  
MODERN  
WORLD.

THERE ARE  
NO MORE  
GREAT WARS  
LIKE THOSE  
QUELLED BY  
THE MAGI OF  
THE PAST...

...WAS  
REDUCED TO  
THAT WORK  
AFTER LOSS  
OF OTHER  
LIVELIHOOD.

PERHAPS THE  
TRAVELING  
ENTERTAINER  
I SAW...

PAD...

...AND THE  
CENTRAL  
LIBRARY  
RESOLUTELY  
FORBIDS ALL  
PRODUCTION  
OF NEW  
GRIMOIRES.

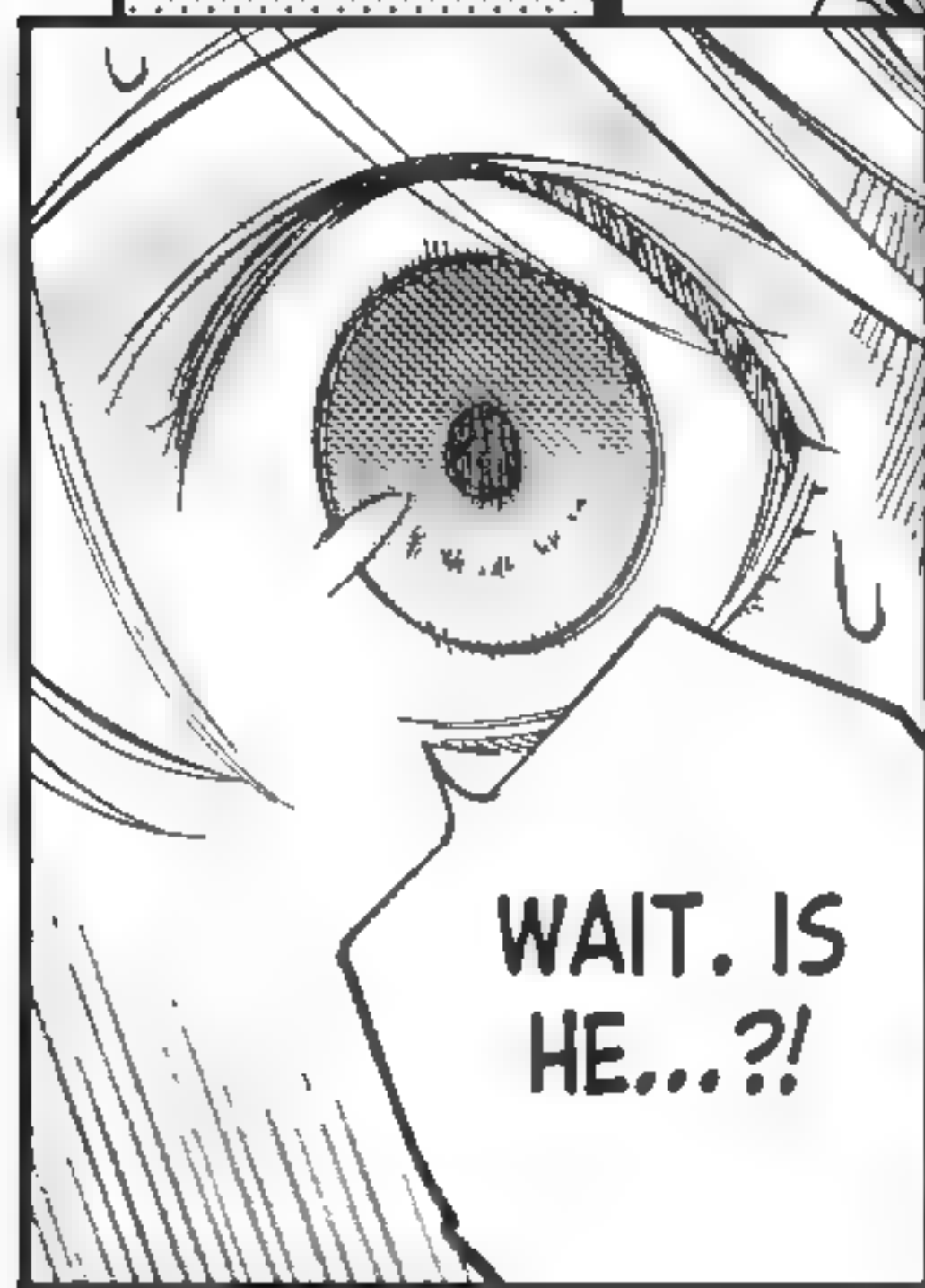
*Which are  
all, I must  
admit,  
positive  
things...*





IT'S A KAFN-

HUH?  
...OH!



WAIT. IS  
HE...?!



OF  
COURSE...

...AS A  
LIBRARIAN,  
IT'S HARD TO  
SUPPRESS DESIRE  
TO OBLIGE THE  
QUERIES OF  
YOUNG MINDS.



WH-

WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON?!

WHERE'S  
HIS  
OTHER  
HALF?!

WHY  
IS HE  
FLOAT-  
ING IN  
MIDAIR?!

EEEEK!



FWWSSHHH

アアア

IT IS NOT THE  
MAGUS WAY  
TO BOAST OR  
SEEK OTHERS'  
EYES.

WE KEEP  
OUR SECRETS  
SAFE, THAT  
SURPRISE  
MIGHT BE  
OUR ALLY  
WHEN CRISIS  
STRIKES.





MY, MY. ONE BRIEF GLANCE WAS ALL YOU NEEDED TO SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME.

I'M BEGINNING TO REGRET REVEALING MYSELF SO CASUALLY.



THIS MAGUS USES LIGHT MANA!

O-OF COURSE! I SEE WHAT IS HAPPENING!

HE MUST BE USING SPELL SEALS TO MANIPULATE THE WAY LIGHT REFRACTS. THAT'S HOW HE KEEPS HIMSELF HIDDEN FROM VIEW!

FWIP



THE PRO-TECTIONS OFFICE! GUARDIANS OF THE LIBRARY!



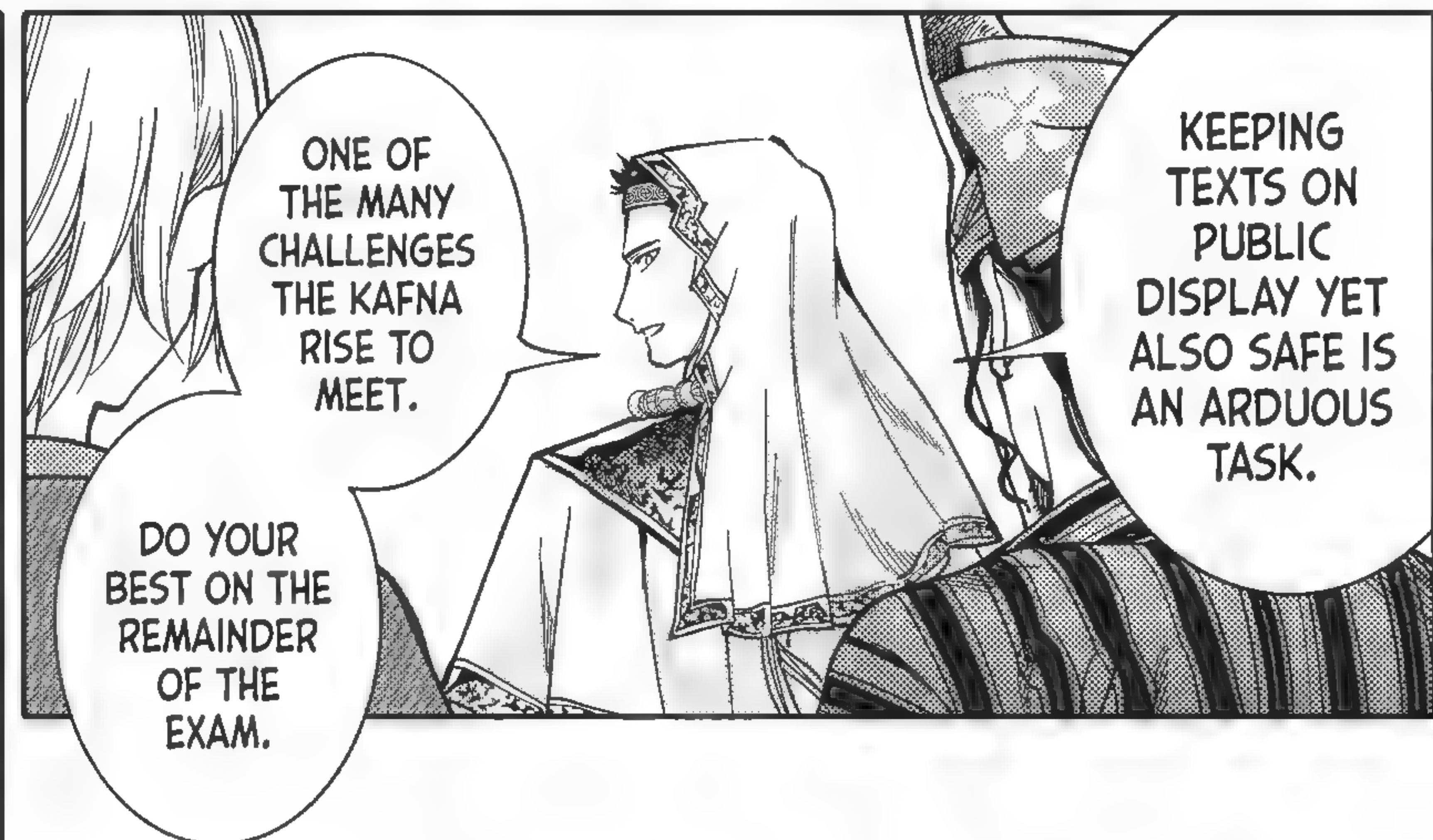
IN FACT, I'M ON MY USUAL ROUNDS RIGHT NOW, PATROLLING THE GROUNDS.

IF YOU'RE FOND OF MAGIC, MIGHT I RECOMMEND REQUESTING ASSIGNMENT TO THE PRO-TECTIONS OFFICE?

A GREAT MANY MAGI TOIL DAY AND NIGHT TO ENSURE THE LIBRARY'S SAFETY.



WE WILL! THANK YOU!



ONE OF THE MANY CHALLENGES THE KAFNA RISE TO MEET.

DO YOUR BEST ON THE REMAINDER OF THE EXAM.

KEEPING TEXTS ON PUBLIC DISPLAY YET ALSO SAFE IS AN ARDUOUS TASK.





OOPS.  
SEEMS MY  
ANGLES ARE  
SLIGHTLY  
OFF.



PRRR!

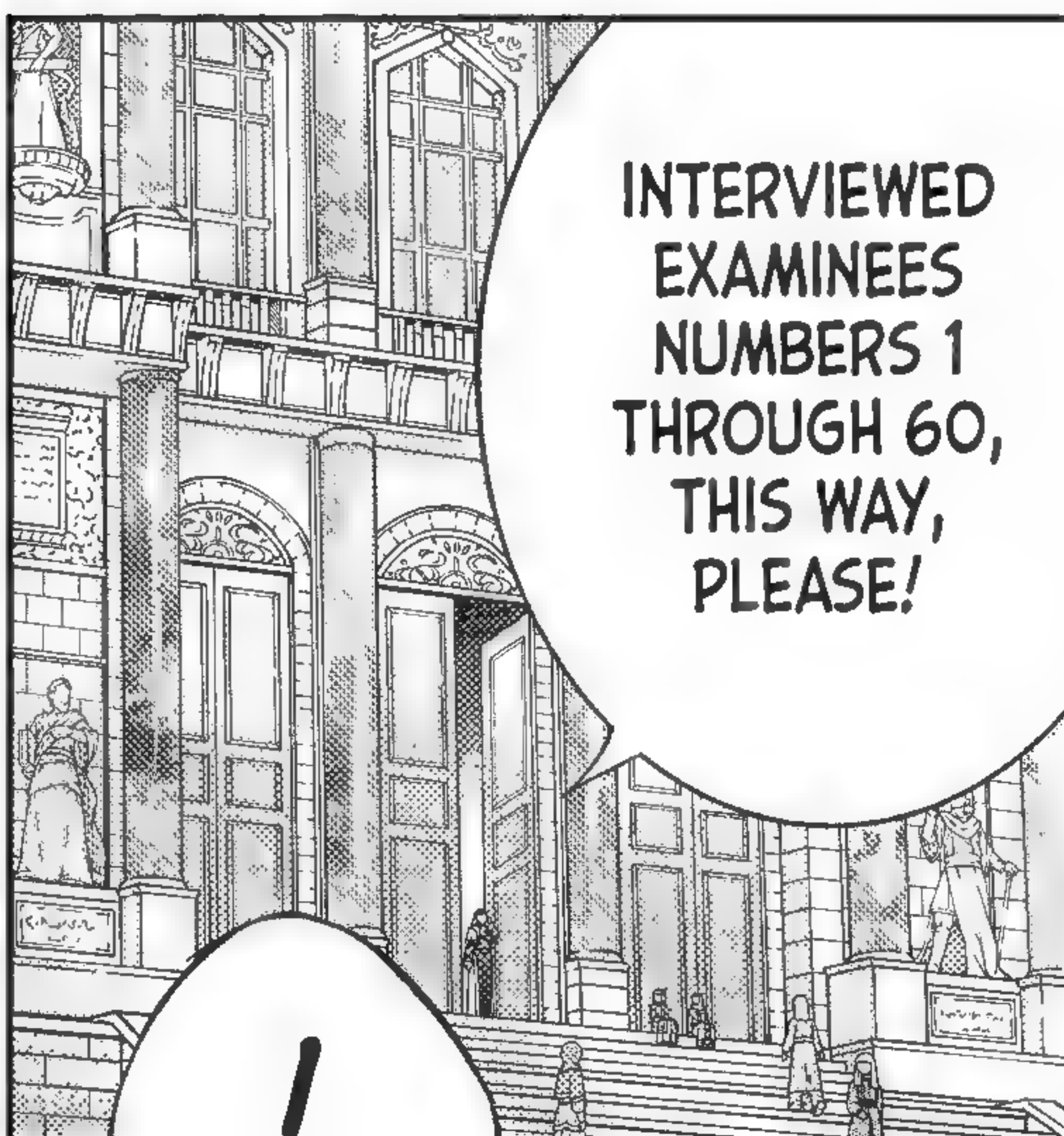
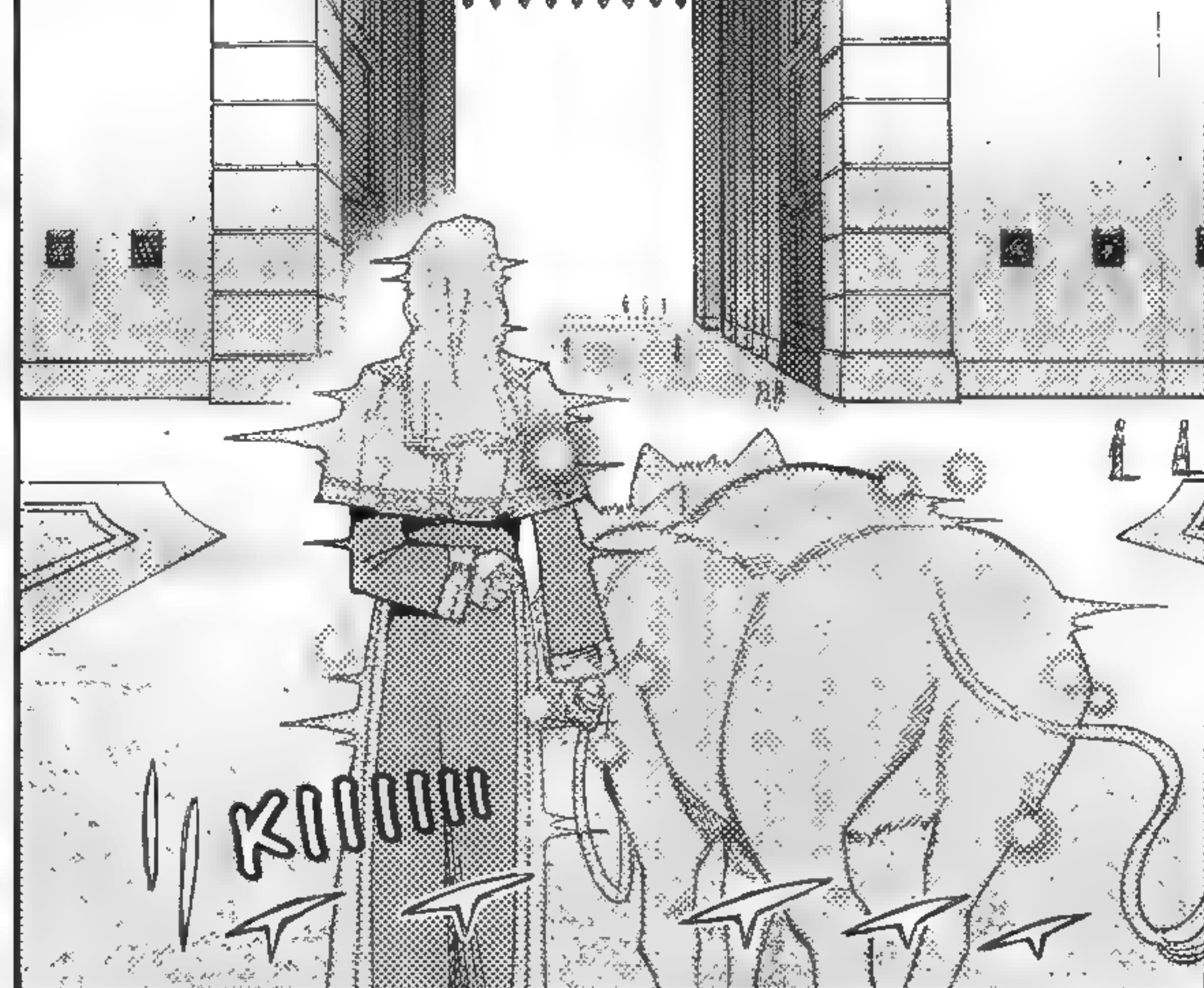
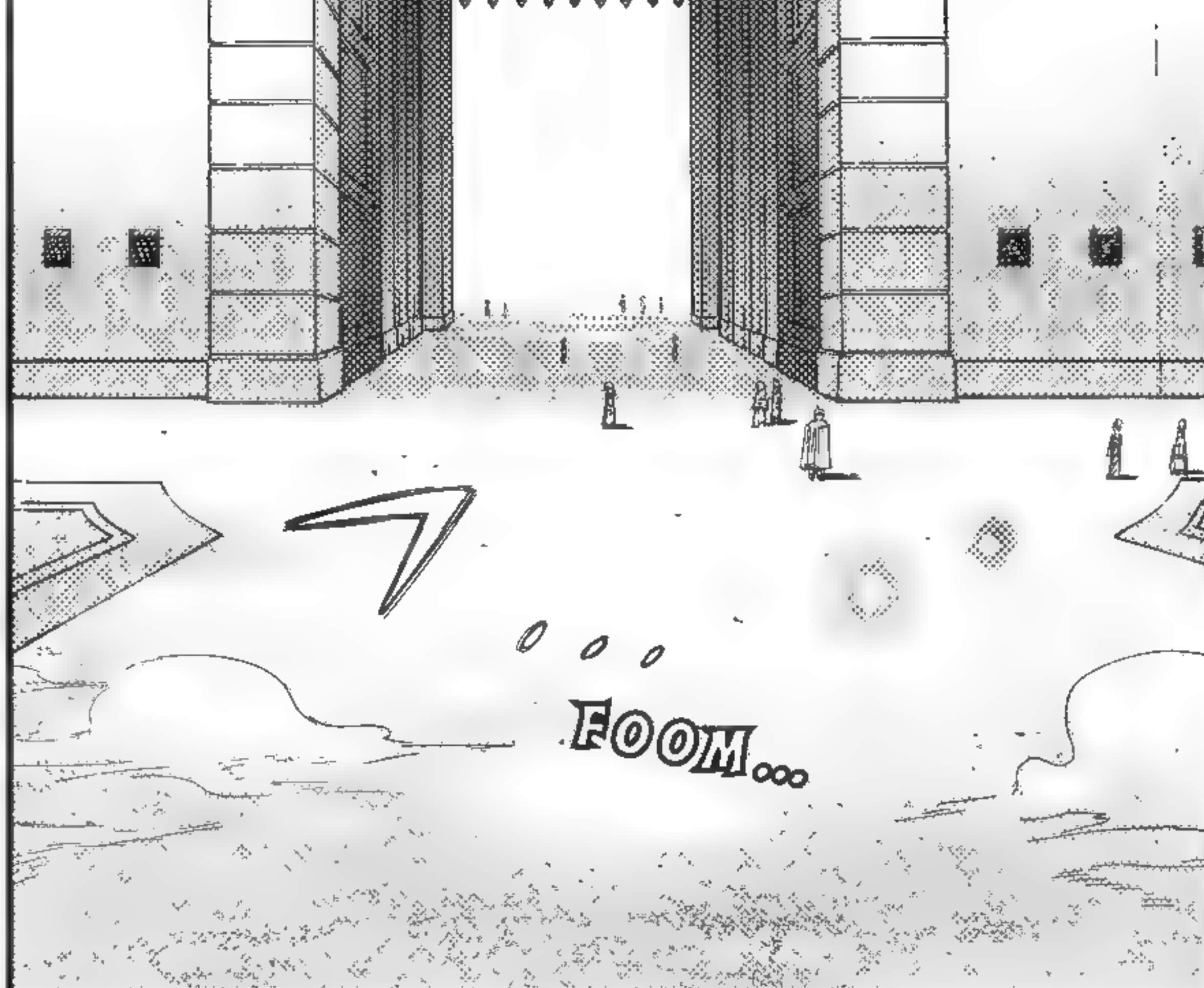
MROW!

SHALL WE  
CONTINUE  
ON?

SORRY FOR THE  
DELAY,  
AHCHAB.

PAD





INTERVIEWED  
EXAMINEES  
NUMBERS 1  
THROUGH 60,  
THIS WAY,  
PLEASE!



WOW...

SEEMS LIKE  
THE LIBRARY  
IS UNDER  
CAREFUL  
WATCH, EVEN  
IF IT'S NOT  
OBVIOUS AT  
A GLANCE.

WHOOOA!

A  
TESTAMENT  
TO THE  
GREAT MANY  
WONDERS  
STORED  
HERE!

WE'LL BE  
LEADING YOU  
TO YOUR  
SITE FOR THE  
PRACTICAL  
COMPONENT.

*The final  
struggle was  
about to  
begin.*



# The Seven Seminal Scripts

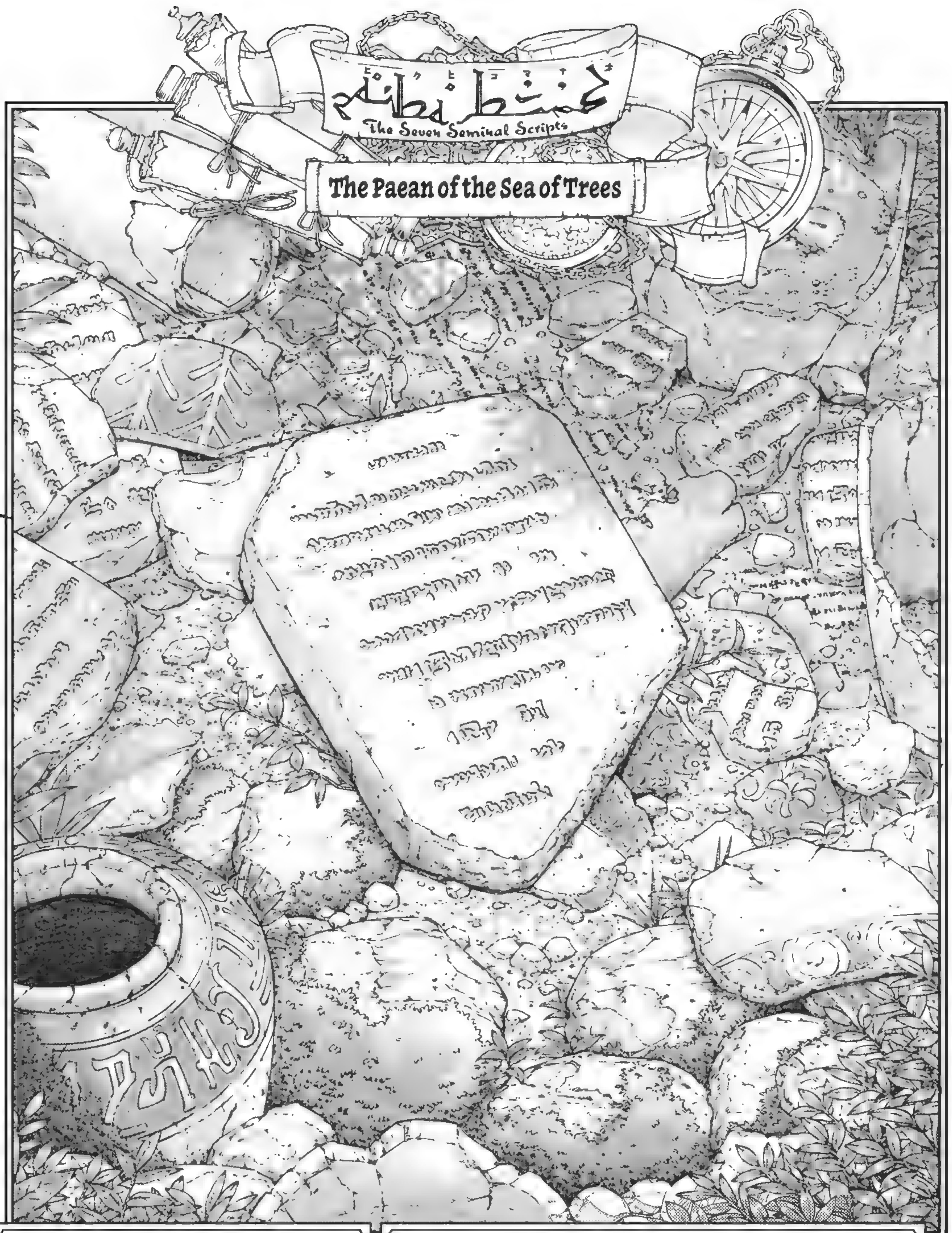
七  
古  
拔  
典

## A Basic Guide to the Seven Seminal Scripts

Throughout the annals of Atlatona, seven texts stand out for the part they played in setting the course of history and shaping the lives of the continent's people. Not all seven brought changes for the better; two had a decidedly adverse impact on civilization, and their legacies are to be described in detail at a later time.

The Central Library safeguards the majority of these seven, such that the texts might be accessible to the public and that no single organization might monopolize the knowledge contained within. The interludes between chapters in this volume are dedicated to the introduction of the Seven Seminal Scripts.





[Author] Unknown

[Date] Unknown (Est. 1,700 Years Ago)

**One of the Seven Seminal Scripts.**

**According to Manaccha, an animistic faith deeply rooted among the continent's people, the continent itself was formed by the great spirit Atlatonan.**

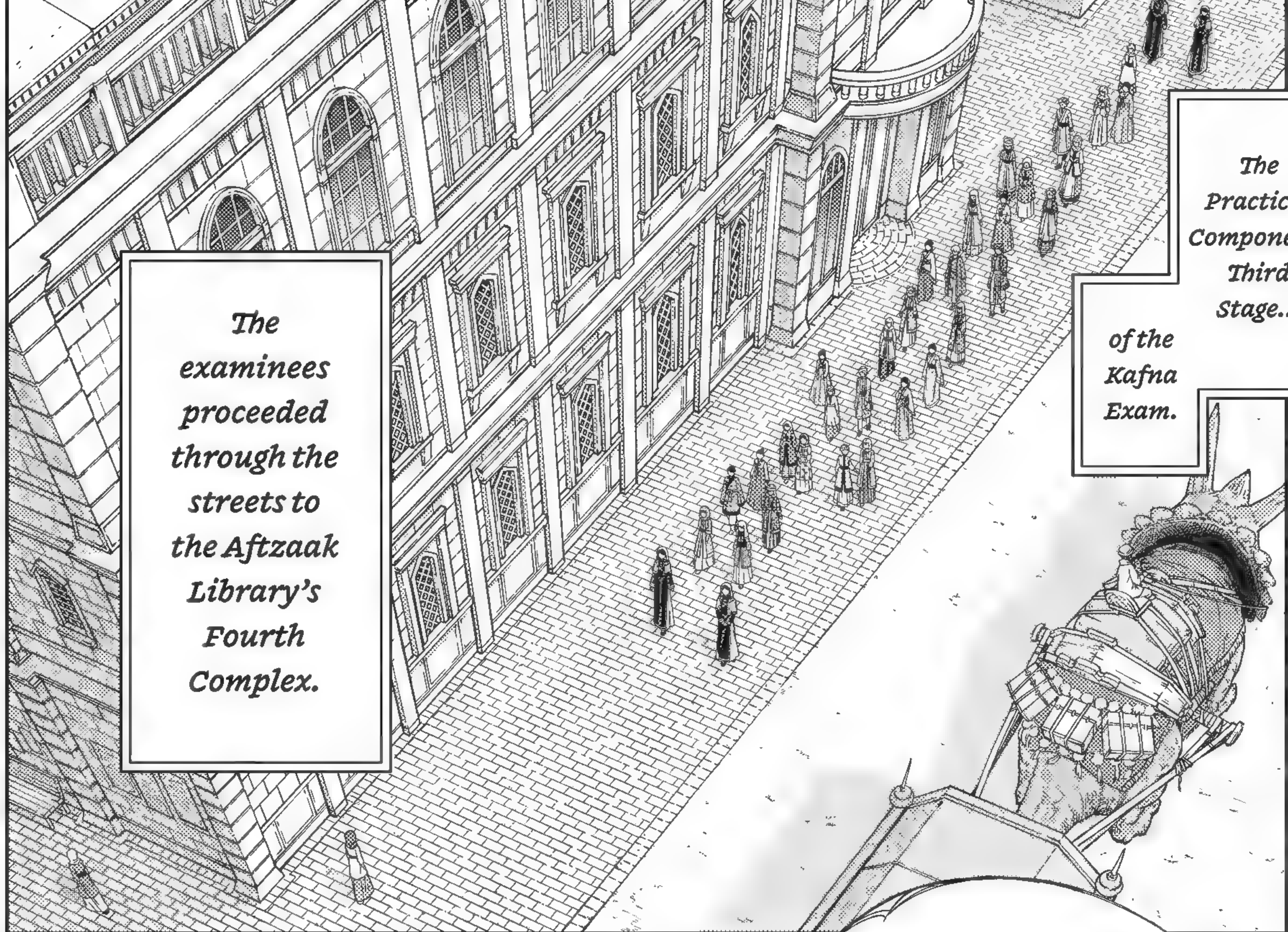
**This clay tablet contains a portion of the Legend of Atlatonan. It is the oldest known record of the legend and is revered as scripture among the faithful.**



*Aftzaak, Western Quarter*







The  
examinees  
proceeded  
through the  
streets to  
the Aftzaak  
Library's  
Fourth  
Complex.

The  
Practical  
Component.  
Third  
Stage...  
of the  
Kafna  
Exam.



THAT  
BUILDING'S  
IN THE  
KADOE  
STYLE!



THAT ONE  
USES RAKTA  
CONSTRUC-  
TION!



WHOOA!



I GOTTA  
STOP  
GAWKING  
LIKE A  
TOURIST...



GASP!



AT  
LEAST...



RAKTA  
AUTONOMOUS  
REGION

AFTZAAK IS  
RIGHT AT THE  
CENTER, WHERE  
ALL SIX REGIONS  
INTERMINGLE.

IT'S SO  
FASCINATING  
TO SEE SO  
MANY CULTURES  
REPRESENTED IN  
ONE LOCATION!

CREYAK  
AUTONOMOUS  
REGION

HYRON  
AUTONOMOUS  
REGION





...IT'S  
CLEAR THAT  
EVERYONE  
ELSE IS  
NERVOUS,  
TOO.



I WASN'T  
ELIMINATED DURING  
THE INITIAL CHECK  
OF MY WRITTEN  
EXAM, BUT I DON'T  
FEEL LIKE I DID  
EXCEPTIONALLY  
WELL, EITHER.

NEXT UP  
IS THE  
PRACTICAL  
STAGE.



...AND I  
DOUBT  
I HAVE  
MUCH IN  
COMMON  
WITH THE  
OTHER  
BOY  
HERE.



...BUT  
MISS  
SOHN  
DOESN'T  
SEEM  
LIKE SHE  
WANTS  
TO TALK  
RIGHT  
NOW...

I'D LIKE TO  
"STRIKE UP  
A CONVER-  
SATION..."

MMBL  
MMBL



WALK  
TALL, AND  
GIVE IT  
YOUR ALL,  
THEO!

SHF...



SHF...



I STILL HAVE  
A CHANCE!  
I CAN STILL  
MAKE THIS  
ONE COUNT!

NO. THAT'S  
NOT HOW  
TO THINK  
ABOUT IT.



AND I  
COMPLETELY  
BUNGLED THE  
INTERVIEW.

IF I DON'T  
PULL OFF  
SOME KIND  
OF MIRACLE  
HERE...









FEEL UP  
TO HAVING  
A CHAT?

HEY  
THERE,  
FRIEND!



REALLY?  
ME, TOO,  
ACTUALLY.

NOPE. JUST  
FELT LIKE  
TALKIN' TO  
SOMEONE,  
Y'KNOW?



OH!  
HELLO.

DO YOU  
NEED  
SOME-  
THING?



MY NAME  
IS THEO  
FUMIS.

YOU  
MUST  
BE,  
UM...?



THE  
NAME'S  
OHGGA.

PLEASED  
TO MEET  
YA!





I'M OF MIXED BLOOD, TOO!

THOUGHT SO! US KIDS WITH THE BLENDED BACKGROUNDS GOTTA STICK TOGETHER!



I'M PART CREYAK AND PART HYRON.

I GREW UP IN CREYAK TERRITORY, THOUGH, SO MY HYRON'S NOT UP TO SNUFF, Y'KNOW?

OH! DID MY EARS CATCH YOU OFF GUARD?



WELL, UM, IN THAT CASE...

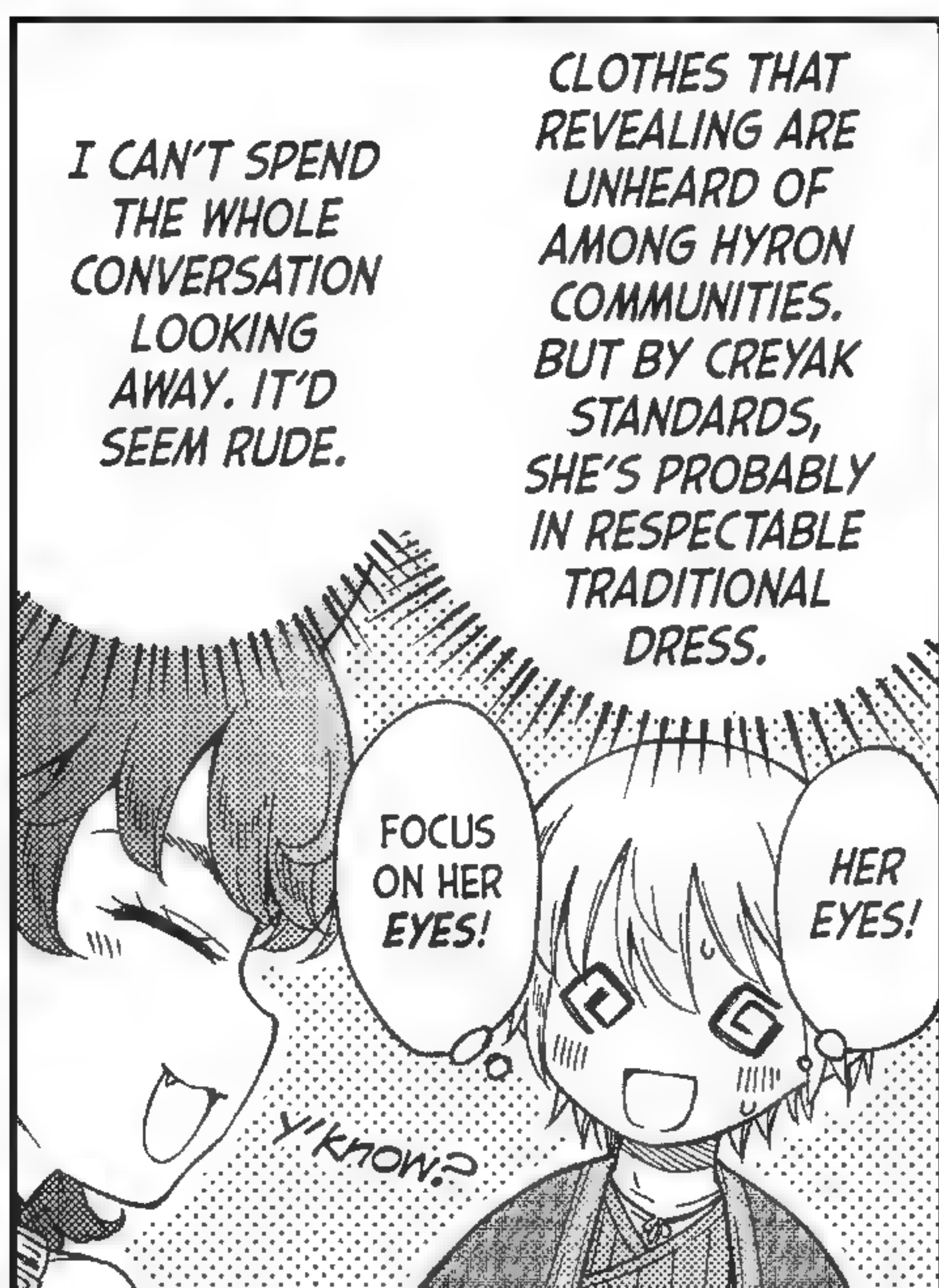
...IT'S NICE TO MEET YA, OHGGA!

I SEE.



THAT MAKES US FRIENDS. YOU CAN RELAX AROUND ME, THEO.

IN CREYAK, EVERYONE SPEAKS AS EQUALS. NO STUFFY FORMAL LANGUAGE.



I CAN'T SPEND THE WHOLE CONVERSATION LOOKING AWAY. IT'D SEEM RUDE.

CLOTHES THAT REVEALING ARE UNHEARD OF AMONG HYRON COMMUNITIES. BUT BY CREYAK STANDARDS, SHE'S PROBABLY IN RESPECTABLE TRADITIONAL DRESS.

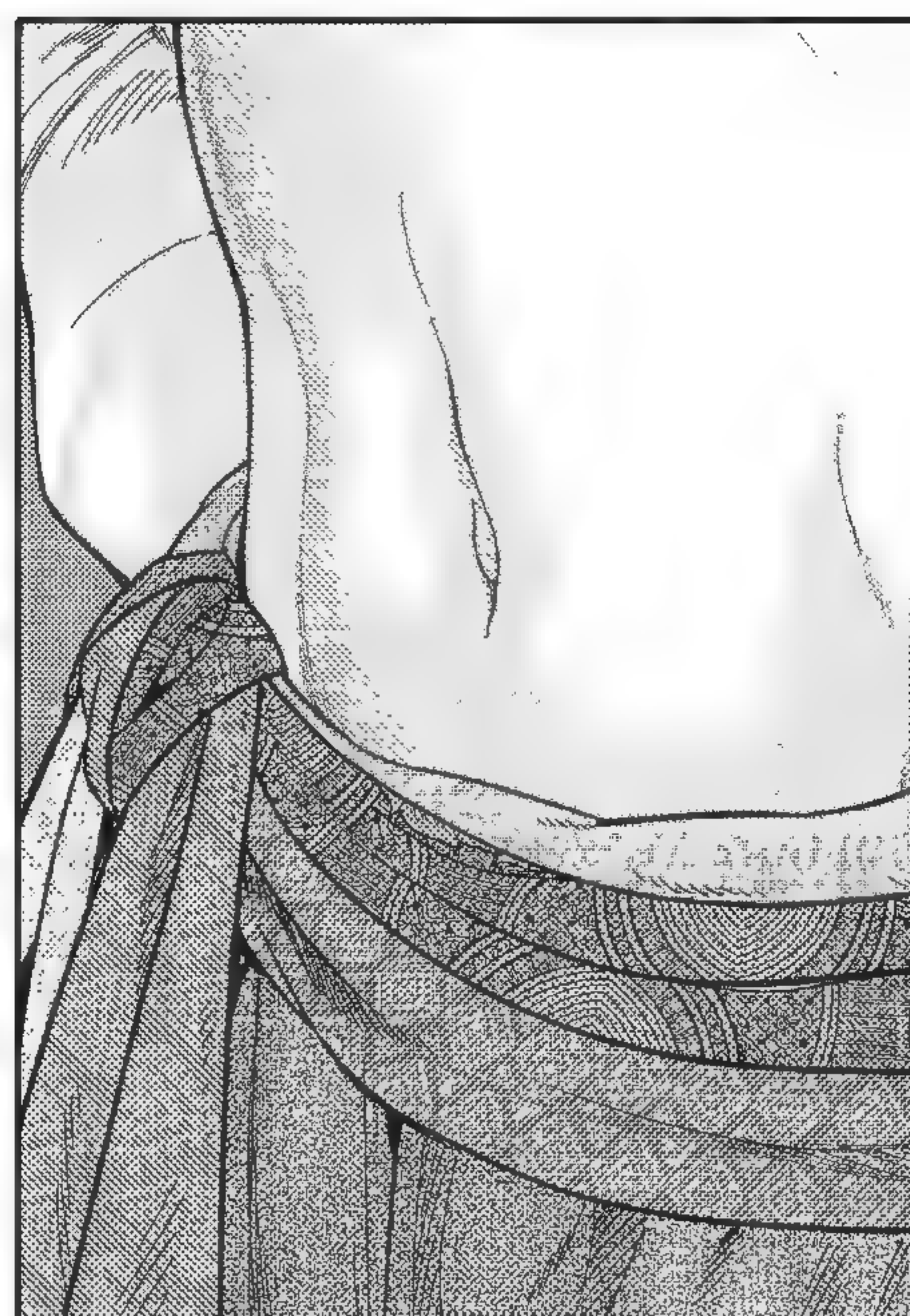
FOCUS ON HER EYES!

HER EYES!

Y'KNOW,?



EEP! DOESN'T LEAVE MUCH TO THE IMAGINATION!







THERE WAS  
A SUDDEN  
FLASH OF  
LIGHT IN  
MY EYES.

I'M  
NOT  
SURE...

IS  
SOMETHING  
WRONG?



I KNOW  
WHAT  
YOU  
MEAN.

yay!  
yay!

EVERYONE'S  
SO ON EDGE,  
IT GIVES ME  
THE JITTERS!



ACK!

What's  
that  
glare?!

GLEAM!!



FLICK  
...



FLICK  
...



HMPH!  
NITWITS TO  
THE LAST.



GLINT  
//  
//  
//

AND IT  
WASN'T  
THE SUN.  
WRONG  
DIRECTION.





BOY, THAT  
WRITTEN  
EXAM WAS  
REAL TOUGH,  
Y'KNOW?

I PERFORMED  
FLAWLESSLY  
ON THE FIRST  
AND SECOND  
STAGES.

THAT TIME SPENT  
MEMORIZING 30 YEARS'  
WORTH OF PAST EXAM  
QUESTIONS WASN'T  
EVEN NECESSARY. BUT  
I DID IT ANYWAY, JUST  
TO BE SAFE.

...BUT IT'S  
PLAIN I'M  
UNSURPASSED  
HERE.

I LINED UP  
AT THE BACK  
SO I COULD  
OBSERVE  
THEM,  
JUST TO BE  
SAFE...



DOUBTLESS  
THEY WERE  
WAVED THROUGH  
PRELIMINARY  
GRADING  
MERELY TO FILL  
THE DIVERSITY  
QUOTA.

WHAT A  
WASTE OF  
PERFECTLY  
GOOD  
SLOTS.

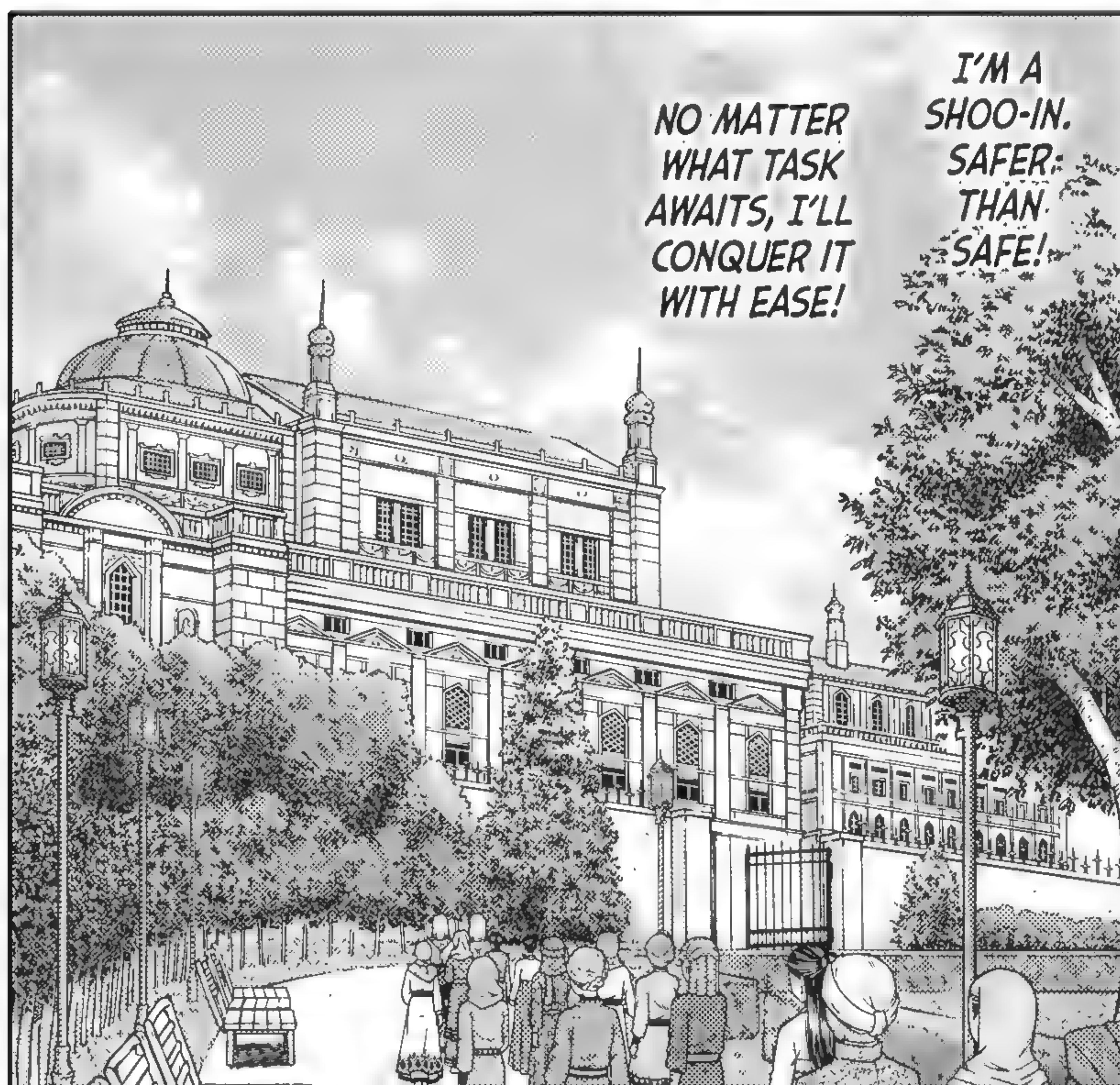
YOU  
DID  
?!

I STARTED  
NAPPING  
RIGHT  
AWAY.

I THOUGHT  
SO, TOO!  
I WAS SO  
SLEEPY!

HMPH. A  
COUPLE OF  
HOPELESS  
PROVINCIALS.

LIKE  
INSIPIDITY  
ITSELF  
UP AND  
SPROUTED  
LEGS.



NO MATTER  
WHAT TASK  
AWAITS, I'LL  
CONQUER IT  
WITH EASE!

I'M A  
SHOO-IN.  
SAFER  
THAN  
SAFE!

NO MATTER.  
THEY'LL BOTH FALL  
FAR SHORT OF THE  
THRESHOLD WHEN  
OUR TOTAL SCORES  
ARE CALCULATED.  
I'LL NOT HAVE  
TO BEGIN MY  
ILLUSTRIOUS  
CAREER  
ALONGSIDE  
THE LIKES  
OF THEM.





# 第三次試験

*The Third Stage of the Kafna Exam*

EVEN THE  
AUXILIARY  
LIBRARIES ARE  
ENORMOUS!

FOR THE THIRD  
PORTION OF THE  
EXAM, YOU WILL  
BE WORKING  
IN GROUPS OF  
THREE.

GROUP  
ASSIGNMENTS ARE  
AS DISPLAYED AT  
THE ENTRANCE.  
PLEASE CHECK  
YOUR NUMBER  
AND FIND YOUR  
GROUPMATES.

Aftzaak Library,  
Fourth Complex

IF YOUR GROUP  
IS UNABLE TO  
SOLVE THE  
PROBLEM IN THE  
ALLOTTED TIME,  
ALL MEMBERS  
FAIL THIS  
STAGE.

NOTE THAT A  
DIFFERENT TASK  
IS ASSIGNED TO  
EACH GROUP.  
TIME LIMITS  
ALSO VARY  
BY TASK.

WHO'S  
NUMBER  
31?!

WHERE'S  
THE REST  
OF MY  
GROUP?

YOU MUST  
ESTIMATE THE  
ALLOTTED TIME  
BASED ON THE  
COMPLEXITY  
OF YOUR TASK  
AND PROCEED  
ACCORDINGLY.

FINALLY, NOTE  
THAT YOU  
WILL NOT BE  
INFORMED OF  
HOW MUCH  
TIME YOU ARE  
GIVEN.













I TOTALLY  
AGREE,  
Y'KNOW!!!!

WELL, LET'S  
PUT OUR  
HEADS  
TOGETHER  
AND  
TROUNCE  
THIS TEST!

JUST  
TO BE  
SAFE...

?



WOW!!  
Way to  
take  
charge!

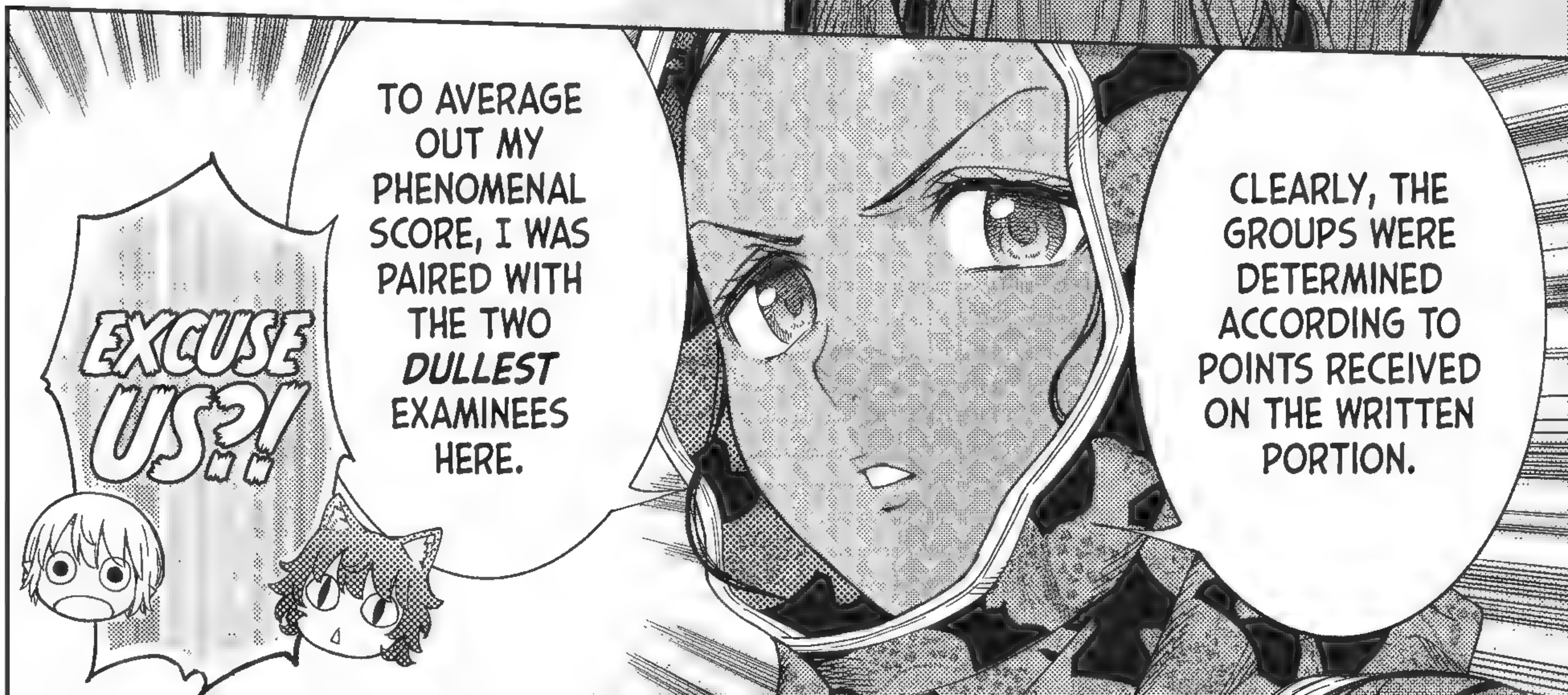
GLINT ✂

I, NATICA  
QUAPAN, AM  
APPOINTING  
MYSELF  
AS GROUP  
LEADER.

...JUST TO BE  
ABSOLUTELY  
CERTAIN, LET  
ME SPELL  
THIS OUT.

YOU WILL DO  
EXACTLY AS  
I SAY, AND  
**NOTHING**  
ELSE.  
UNDER-  
STOOD?

OOH!  
SUCH  
CONFI-  
DENCE!

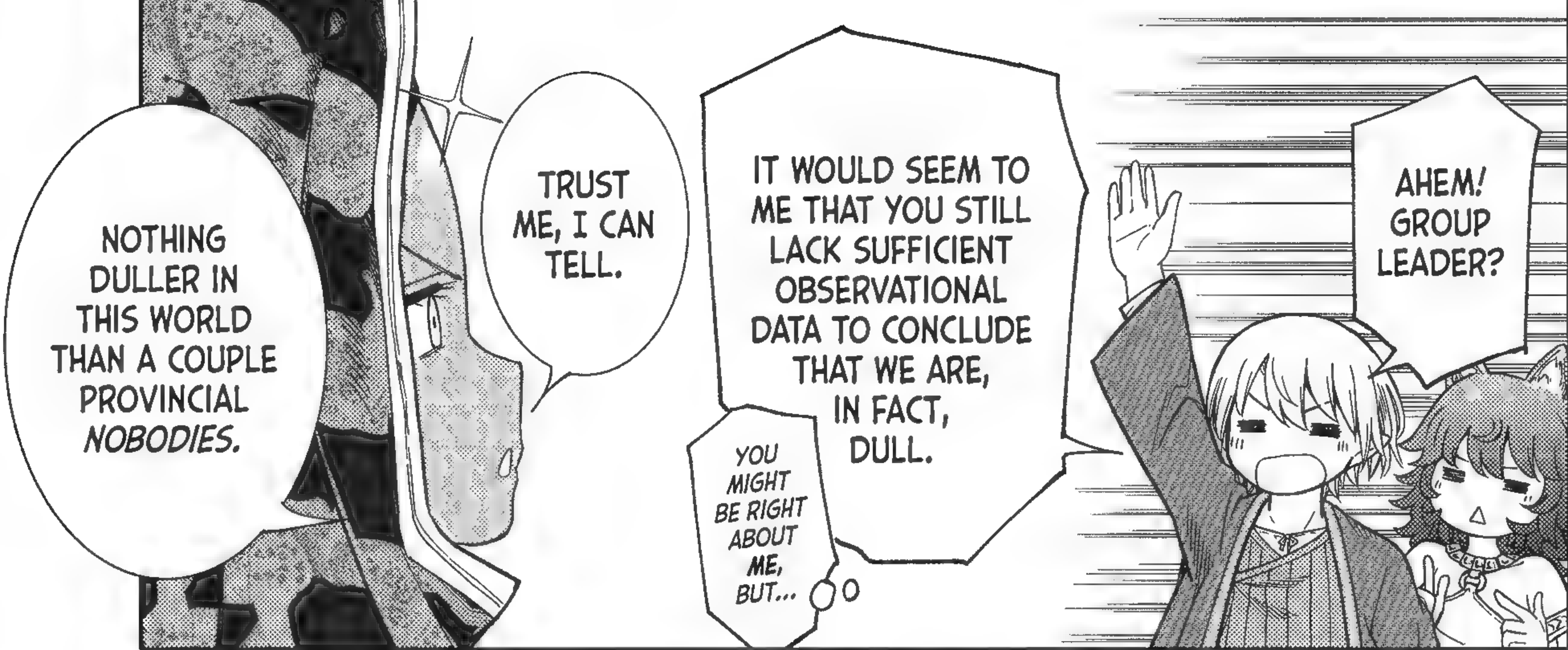


EXCUSE  
US?!

TO AVERAGE  
OUT MY  
PHENOMENAL  
SCORE, I WAS  
PAIRED WITH  
THE TWO  
**DULLEST**  
EXAMINEES  
HERE.

CLEARLY, THE  
GROUPS WERE  
DETERMINED  
ACCORDING TO  
POINTS RECEIVED  
ON THE WRITTEN  
PORTION.









I'D SAY  
IT'S ONLY  
CONSID-  
ERATE TO  
ADHERE  
TO THE  
MAJOR-  
ITY.

AH, BUT DO  
HYRON NOT  
NUMBER  
IN EXCESS  
OF *HALF*  
THE CITY'S  
POPULA-  
TION?



YOUR  
ARGUMENT  
MIGHT HOLD  
WATER IF  
WE WERE IN  
THE HYRON  
REGION.  
BUT *THIS* IS  
AFTZAAK. IT  
EXISTS INDE-  
PENDENTLY!



HM? AND WHEN  
VISITING OTHER  
PLACES, IS IT  
NOT COMMON  
SENSE TO GARB  
ONESELF SO AS  
NOT TO OFFEND  
THE LOCALS?

THE FACT  
THAT YOU  
CAN'T EVEN  
GRASP THAT  
LOGIC ONLY  
PROVES HOW  
DIM YOU ARE.



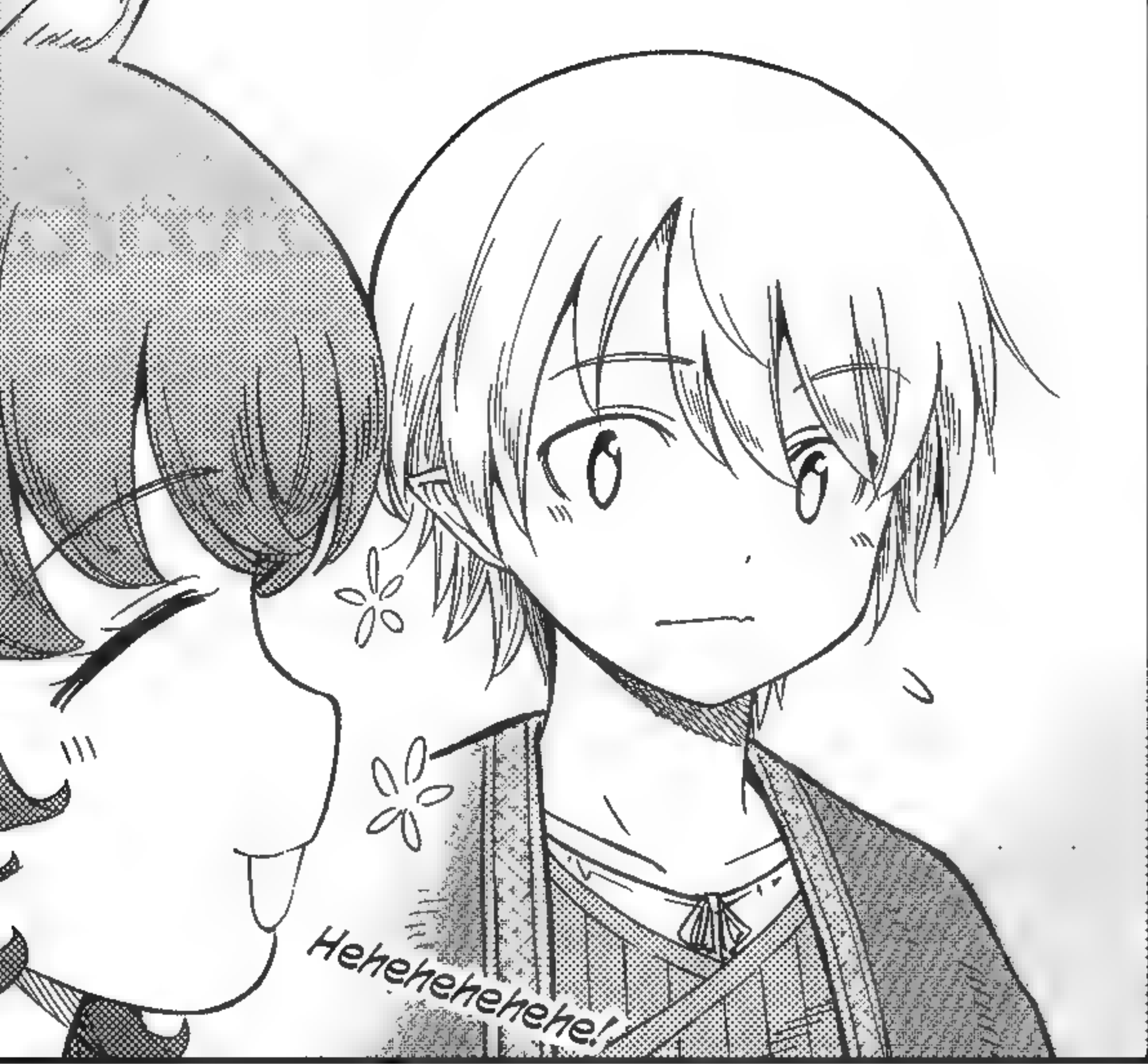
TAKING CARE NOT  
TO EXPOSE BARE  
SKIN IS A VALUE  
OF *HYRON* CULTURE  
AND HAS NOTHING  
TO DO WITH HER!  
SHE'S IN PROPER  
ATTIRE BY CREYAK  
STANDARDS!



THE WORD  
*HUONE* IN  
HYRON SOUNDS  
JUST LIKE THE  
CREYAK WORD  
FOR "HONEY"!

HEY,  
DID YOU  
KNOW?





Hehehehehe!



SO I  
DON'T  
MIND AT  
ALL IF YOU  
WANT TO  
CALL ME  
HUONE!

SWEET,  
DELICIOUS  
HONEY! I  
LOVE THE  
STUFF!

TWERK  
TWERK



WE'RE READY TO  
HAND OUT TASKS.  
PLEASE SEND ONE  
REPRESENTATIVE  
FROM YOUR  
GROUP TO  
COLLECT  
YOURS.



HAPPY TO  
TAKE CARE  
OF ALL  
OUR LITTLE  
ERRANDS.

I GOT  
THIS,  
GROUP  
LEADER!  
ON MY  
WAY!



FIRST IS  
GROUP 1.  
PLEASE STEP  
FORWARD...



C'MON!  
SHE'S NOT  
EVEN THAT  
FAR AWAY!

IT'LL BE  
FINE. YOU  
CAN WAIT  
HERE AND  
WATCH MY  
EVERY  
MOVE,  
Y'KNOW?

I SUSPECT  
YOU'D  
MANAGE TO  
LOSE IT ON  
YOUR WAY  
BACK.

NO. I'LL  
GO. JUST  
TO BE  
SAFE.





NOT THAT  
I CARE,  
BUT TELL  
ME...

WHAT MADE  
YOU ASPIRE  
TO BE A  
KAFNA?

...  
*This is  
awkward...*



NEXT,  
GROUP  
2...



I'VE HAD A  
DEEP LOVE  
FOR BOOKS  
EVER SINCE  
I WAS  
LITTLE!

OF COURSE!

WE'LL BE  
ABLE TO  
UNDERSTAND  
EACH OTHER IF  
WE SHARE OUR  
STORIES!



HUH?  
WELL,  
THAT'S...



IN FACT,  
ONE OF THE  
REASONS  
I CAME TO  
THE CENTRAL  
LIBRARY WAS  
SO I MIGHT  
REUNITE—

ENOUGH.

HUH?



EVER SINCE  
THEN, I'VE  
LOOKED UP  
TO KAFNA AND  
DREAMED OF  
BECOMING  
ONE!



THE FIRST  
KAFNA I  
MET, WHO  
LENT ME MY  
FIRST BOOK,  
WAS SO  
COOL!





CAREFREE  
VILLAGE  
BOY.

WAKES  
UP ONE  
DAY AND  
DECIDES  
TO BECOME  
A KAFNA.  
SUCH BIG  
DREAMS.

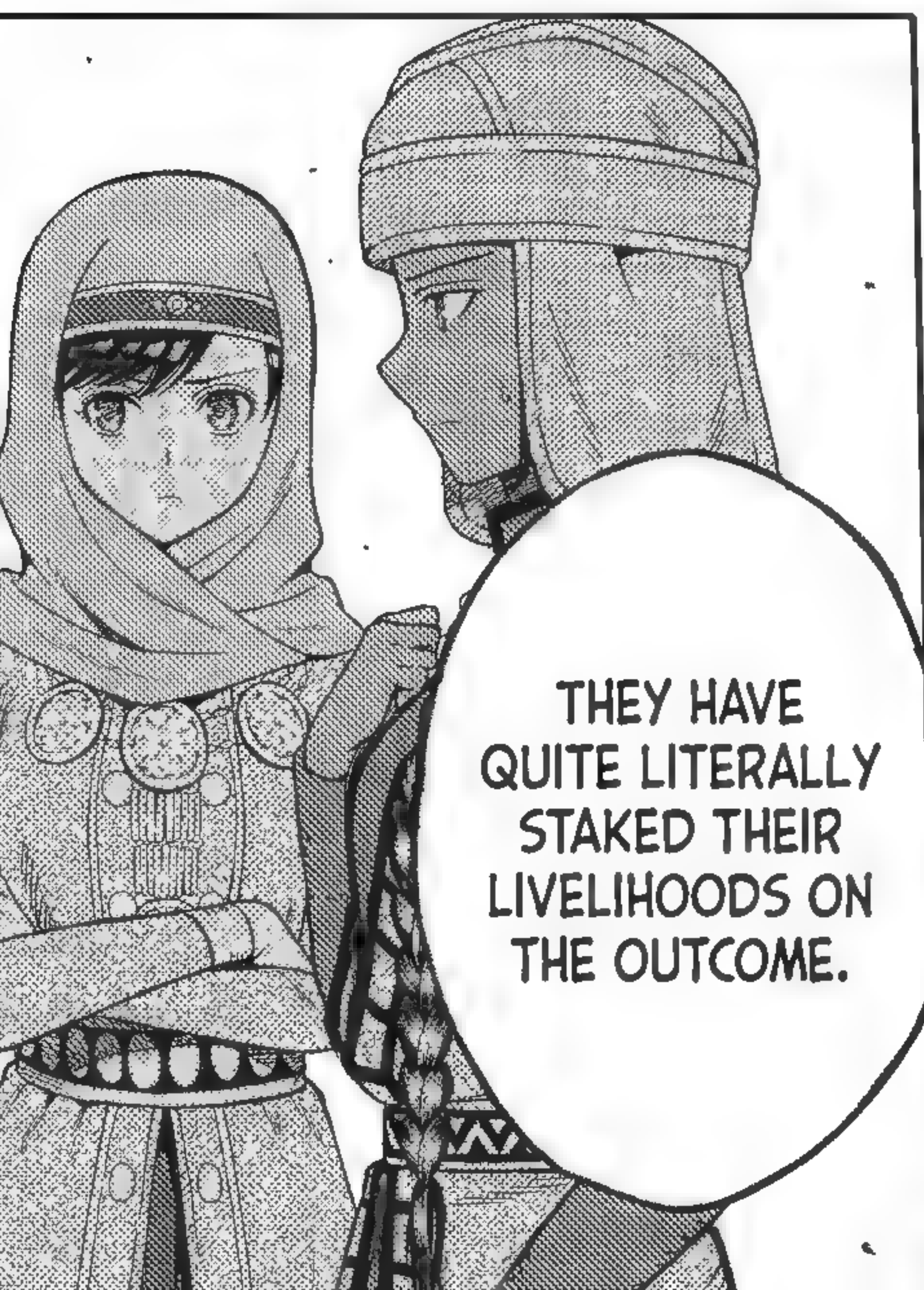


ABSOLUTELY  
PATHETIC.



OF THE  
*DETERMINATION*  
WITH WHICH EVERY  
EXAMINEE IN THIS  
ROOM FACES THE  
TEST.

YOU DON'T  
HAVE THE  
SLIGHTEST  
NOTION OF  
WHAT IT MEANS  
TO BE HERE.



THEY HAVE  
QUITE LITERALLY  
STAKED THEIR  
LIVELIHOODS ON  
THE OUTCOME.



...OR  
ENDURED  
DISOWNMENT  
BY THEIR  
FATHERS  
FOR SIMPLY  
DARING TO  
WALK THIS  
PATH.



HOW THEY'VE  
SACRIFICED  
EVERY MOMENT  
FOR STUDY...





NOT TO MENTION, WERE YOU AND THAT *TRAMP* NOT HERE, I WOULD HAVE A PROPER TEAM FOR MY FINAL TASK.

CAN YOU AT LEAST GRASP THAT?

AND YOU, IGNORANT OF THE WORLD AND ATTEMPTING THE TEST ON A WHIM—YOUR VERY PRESENCE MEANS...

...SOME DEDICATED SOUL OUT THERE IS NOW, AT THIS MOMENT, CRUSHED WITH THE BURDEN OF DEFEAT.



LEAVE IT TO A *PROVINCIAL* TO BE UNAWARE OF WHAT KEEPS HIM AFLOAT.

YOU DIDN'T MANAGE ANYTHING.

OH, YEAH ?!

AND I MANAGED TO MAKE THE CUTOFF FOR THE WRITTEN EXAM. I'M NOT *THAT* MUCH WORSE THAN—

SURE, MAYBE I COME ACROSS A LITTLE FLIPPANT.

BUT I'VE WORKED PLENTY HARD TO GET HERE!

S...




...AND STILL THEY'D LET YOU INTO THE INTERVIEW AND PRACTICAL STAGES.

YOUR SCORE ON THE WRITTEN PORTION COULD BE SO LOW AS TO NOT EVEN HAVE A CHANCE...

TO ENSURE THE RANKS OF THE KAFNA AREN'T POPULATED ENTIRELY BY HYRON, THE EXAM HAS A DIVERSITY QUOTA. THOSE HAILING FROM OTHER RACES ARE TREATED WITH EXCEPTIONAL *LENIENCE* DURING THE PRELIMINARY GRADING.





DOOMED TO FAIL, YET WE STILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH YOU.

DON'T YOU GET IT? YOU'RE HERE OUT OF PITY.

*In truth, it was Natica who lacked understanding.*



I...

...DIDN'T MAKE IT HERE ON MY OWN MERIT?

*A system was in place to bolster performance of non-Hyron examinees, but it merely adjusted for the fact that the entirety of the exam was conducted in the Hyron language.*

*Though Theo was of mixed blood, he had registered for the exam as a Hyron. His scores would be unaffected.*

*Misconceptions like Natica's had become entrenched among a certain segment of examinees.*

*And Theo possessed no knowledge with which to refute her claim.*

HOW ABOUT THIS?



WHAT?





...THEN  
BEFORE YOU  
HEAD HOME  
TO YOUR  
HAPPY  
HAMLET, YOU  
CAN KNEEL,  
BEG MY  
FORGIVE-  
NESS...

IF I FAIL  
THIS STAGE  
DUE TO  
YOUR  
INCOMPE-  
TENCE...

...AND ADMIT  
JUST HOW  
INANE YOUR  
REASON FOR  
WANTING TO  
BE A KAFNA  
REALLY IS.



WHOA!  
WHAT'S  
WITH THE  
TENSION  
?!

I'M  
BAAACK!



MY DREAM...

...IS NOT  
INANE!





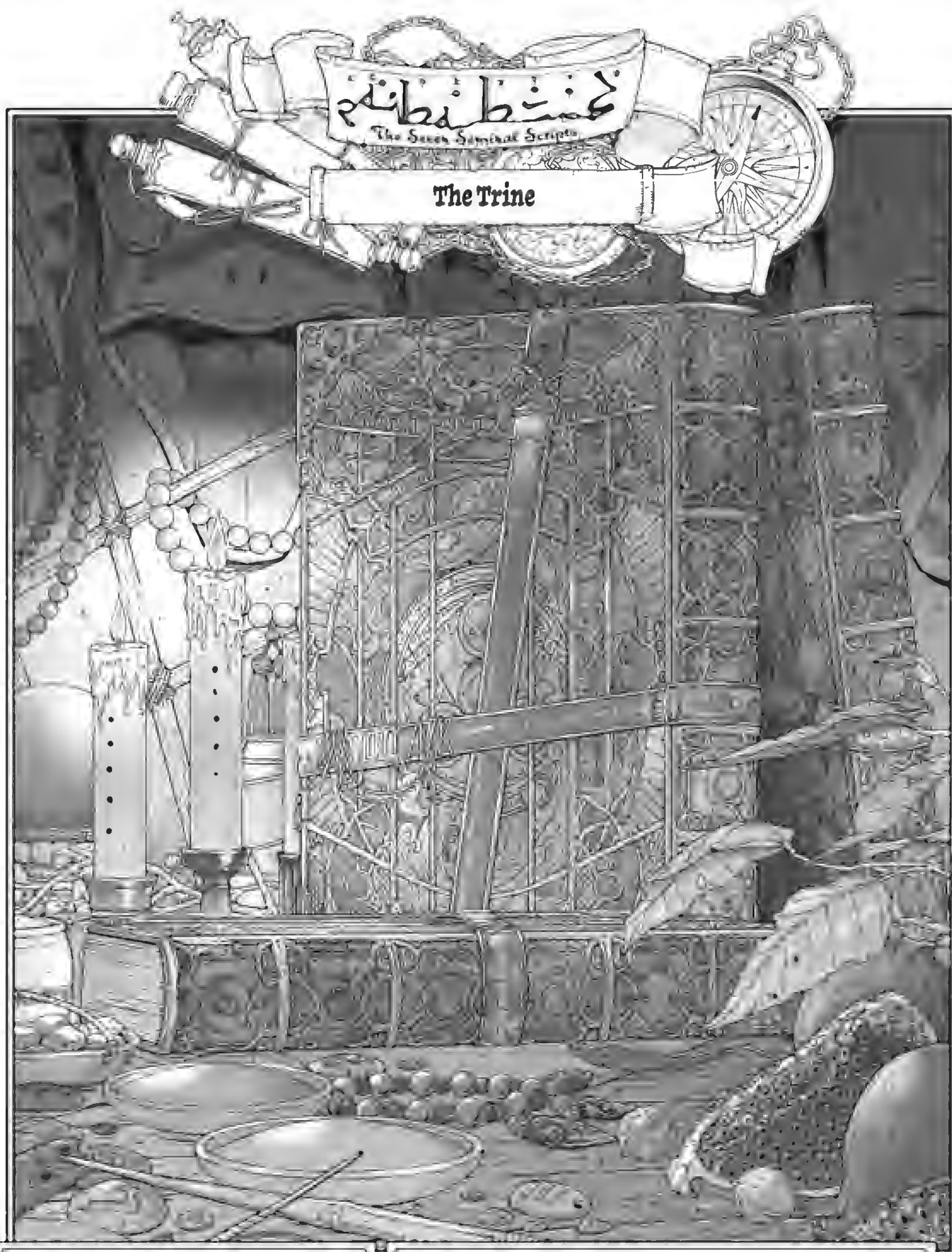
[Author] The Haupi People

[Date] Unknown (Est. 1,400 Years Ago)

**One of the Seven Seminal Scripts.**

A large stone disc discovered among the ruins of the once-prominent Haupi Kingdom. All modern knowledge of spellcasting is said to stem from this disc. The surface displays eight types of mana said to reside in all things. Thus far, only seven have been demonstrated. The eighth remains a mystery and matter of intense research and debate.





[Author] The Kadoe People

[Date] Approx. 1,100 Years Ago


**One of the Seven Seminal Scripts.**

Three grimoires fashioned by the Kadoe, forefathers of the spellbook, in which spirits of Earth, Water, and Thunder reside. The three spirits are said to be the most terrifying in all history, and wielded by the Kadoe, they ensured the 700-year ironclad reign of the Masked Empire.

Curiously, when the Empire finally began to fall at the hands of the Rakta, the Kadoe never employed the Trine in their defense. It is believed that the tomes were somehow lost, and that their disappearance sealed the Empire's fate.

The picture above is an artist's rendering. The true appearance of these three texts is long lost to time.






"...AND ADMIT  
JUST HOW INANE  
YOUR REASON  
FOR WANTING  
TO BE A KAFNA  
REALLY IS."

"IF I FAIL  
THIS STAGE  
DUE TO YOUR  
INCOMPETENCE..."

"... THEN BEFORE  
YOU HEAD HOME  
TO YOUR HAPPY  
HAMLET, YOU CAN  
KNEEL, BEG MY  
FORGIVENESS..."

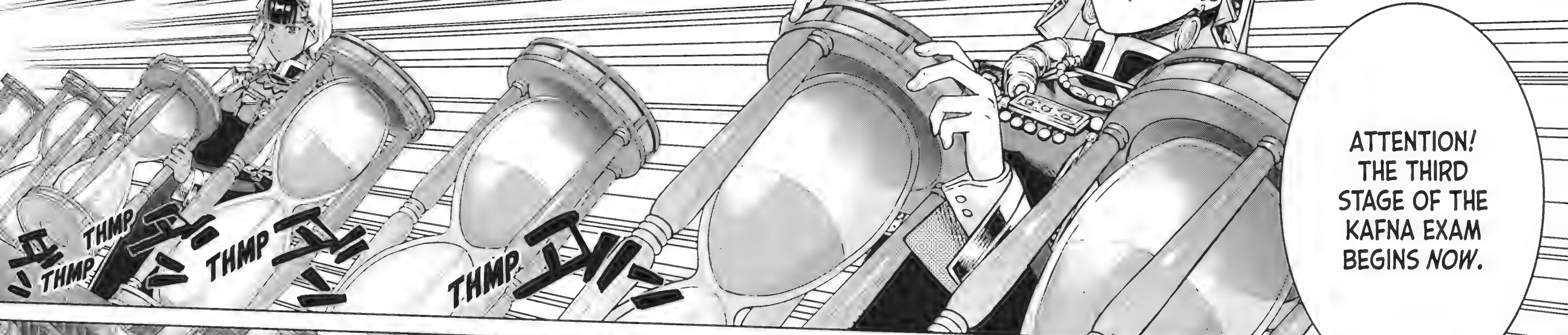
MY  
DREAM IS  
ANYTHING  
BUT  
INANE!



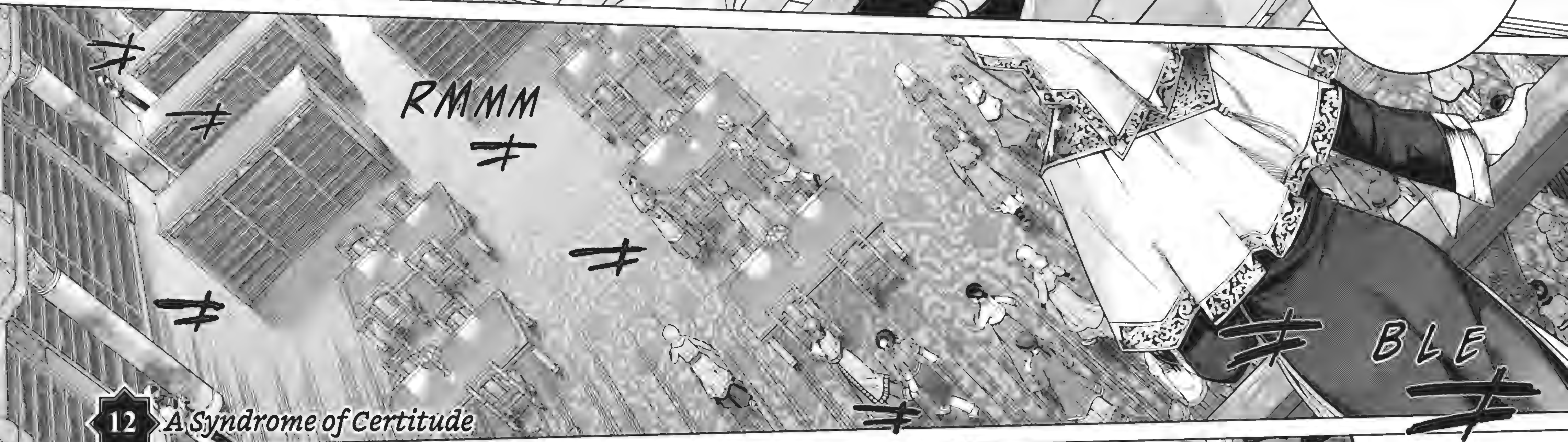
...I DON'T  
KNOW IF I  
HAVE WHAT  
IT TAKES  
TO BACK UP  
THAT CLAIM.

BUT  
AMONG  
THIS  
KIND OF  
TALENT...





ATTENTION!  
THE THIRD  
STAGE OF THE  
KAFNA EXAM  
BEGINS NOW.



RMMM

BLE

12 A Syndrome of Certitude

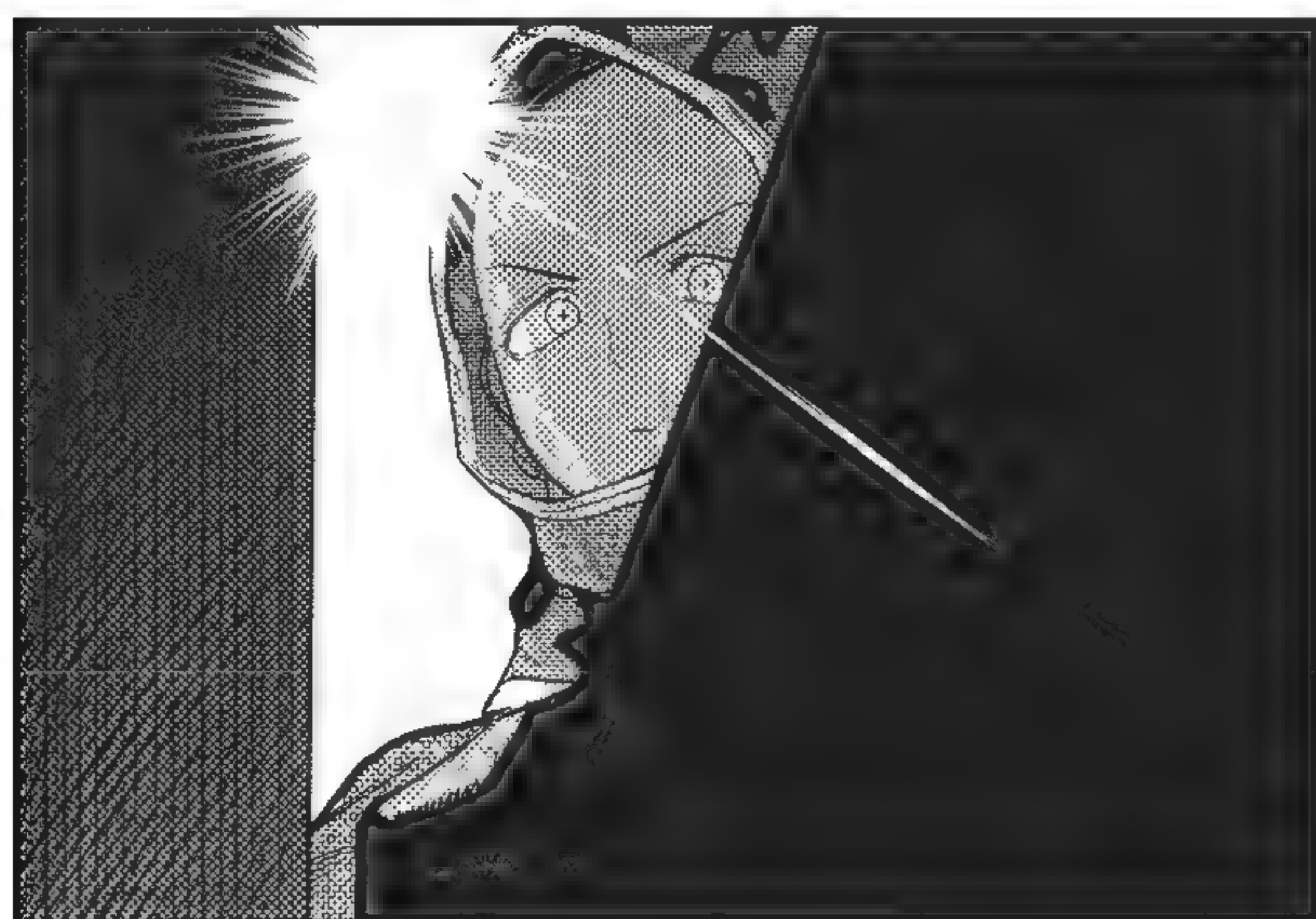
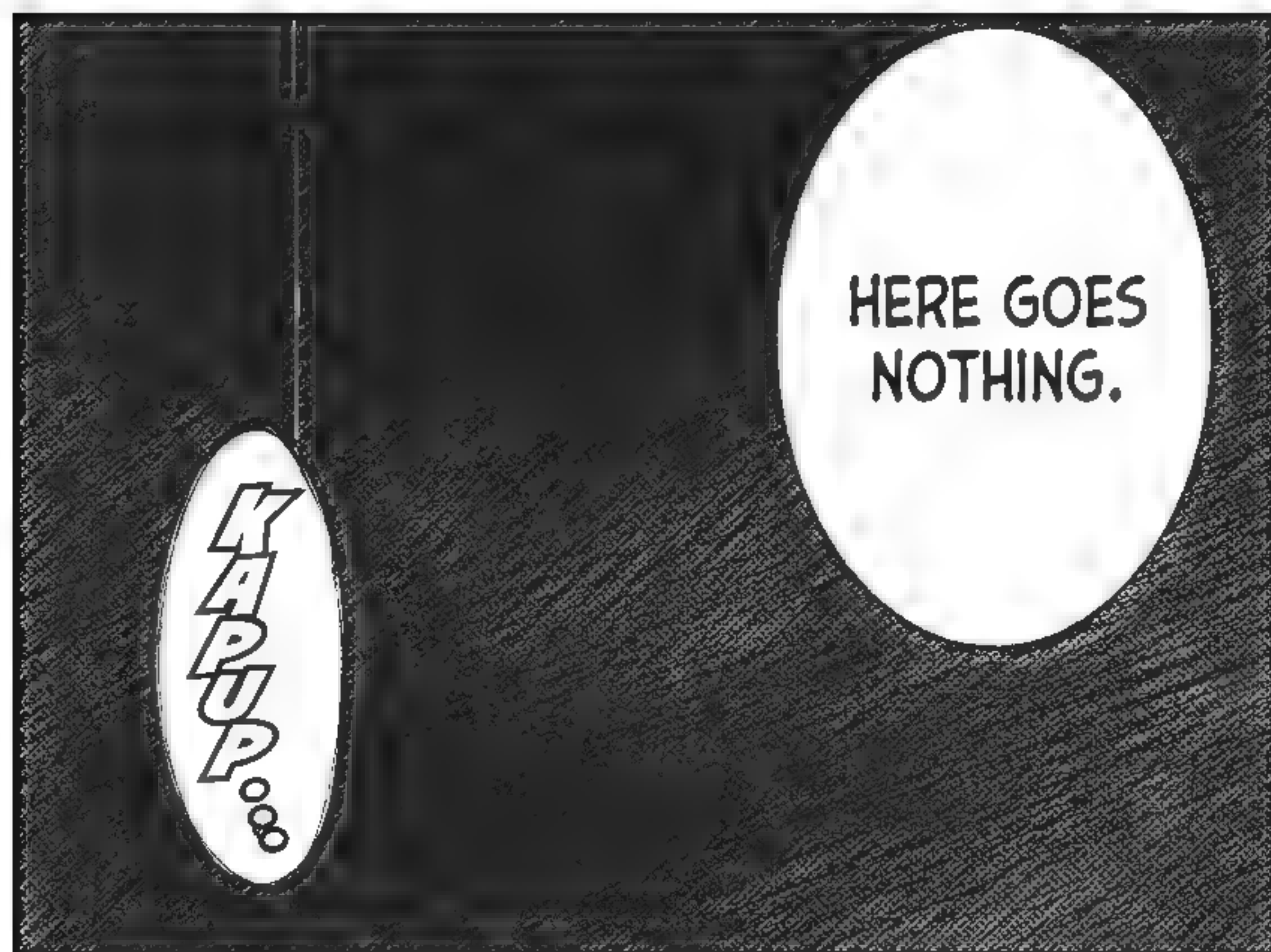


I WAS  
BORN  
FOR THIS,  
Y'KNOW?!

I AM!

I HOPE YOU  
TWO ARE  
READY!





HEAD COORDINATOR,  
PRACTICAL COMPONENT  
REI ANA EDAN

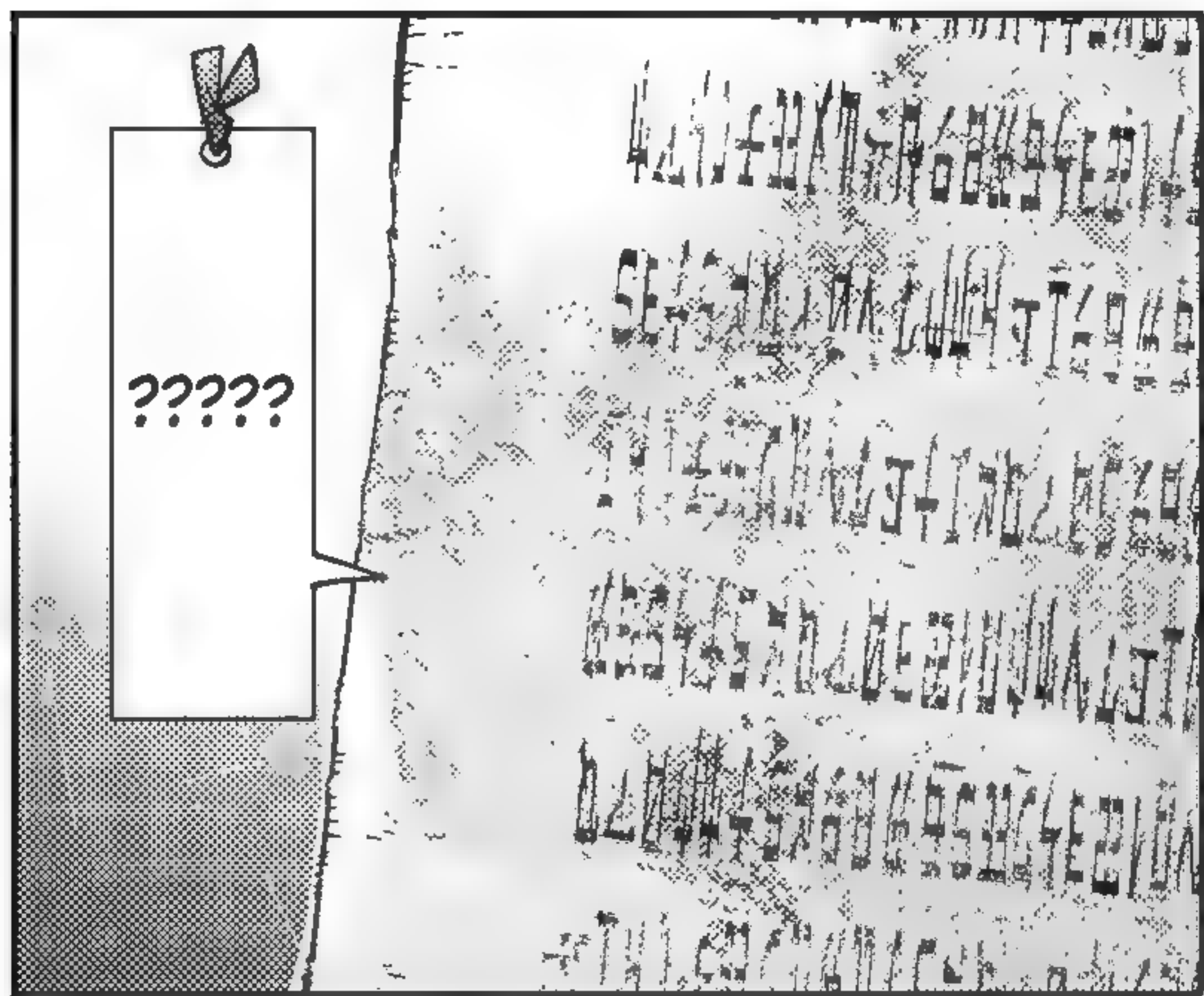
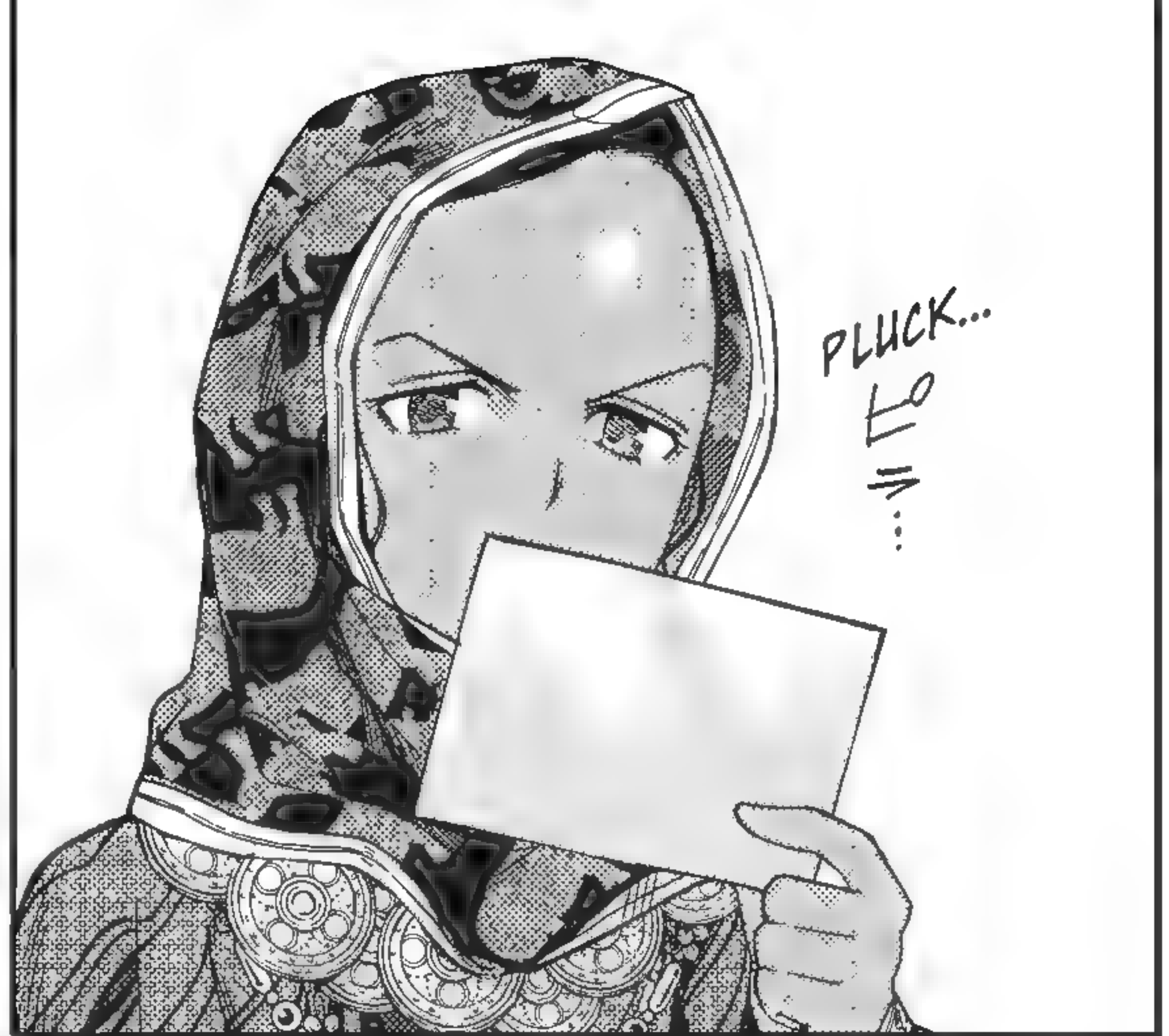
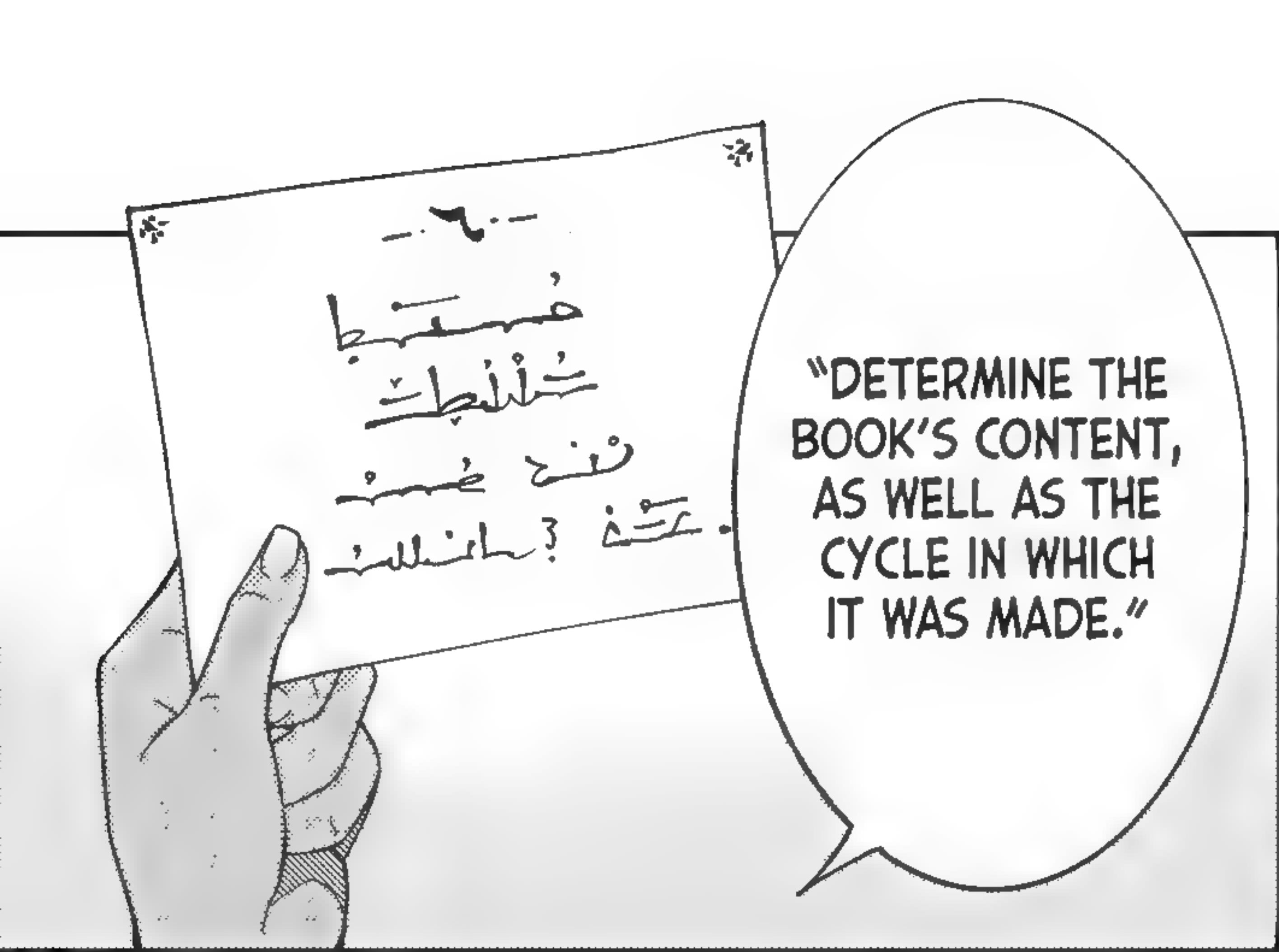


JUST THE  
FRONT  
COVER...

...AND ONE  
PAGE OF THE  
MANUSCRIPT.

...A COUPLE  
FRAGMENTS  
OF AN OLD  
BOOK.













THAT'S THE  
CHALLENGE  
WE'VE BEEN  
TASKED  
WITH.

...AND  
TRANSLATE  
THE CONTENT  
OF THE TEXT.

WE HAVE TO  
SHOW THAT  
WE CAN  
IDENTIFY THE  
LANGUAGE...



I GUESS  
SOME ARE  
EASIER  
THAN  
OTHERS.

EVERY  
GROUP  
REALLY  
DOES  
HAVE A  
DIFFERENT  
ITEM.



IF WE INCLUDE  
THE MINOR  
RACES, THERE ARE  
EASILY OVER 100  
DIFFERENT WRITING  
SYSTEMS ON THE  
CONTINENT.



LET'S START  
WITH WHAT WE  
DO KNOW.



THE  
TATTERED  
REMAINS  
OF THE  
COVER  
BINDING.

AND WE'VE  
GOT ONE  
OTHER  
UNKNOWN.



THE BACK  
OF THE  
PAGE IS  
UNPRINTED.



THE TEXT  
IS HAND-  
WRITTEN...

...AND  
ARRANGED  
INTO TWO  
COLUMNS.





...WE CAN  
ASSUME THE  
COMPOSI-  
TION AND  
BOOKBINDING  
HAPPENED  
TOGETHER.

INTERIM BINDING  
DIDN'T REALLY  
EXIST BEFORE  
THE ADVENT OF  
PRESSES, SO I  
THINK...



...DO THEY  
MEAN WHEN IT  
WAS *WRITTEN*  
OR WHEN IT  
WAS *BOUND*?

WAIT. SO  
WHEN THEY  
SAY THE  
CYCLE...



IF WE WANNA  
KNOW WHEN IT  
WAS MADE, ALL  
WE HAVE TO DO  
IS FIGURE OUT  
WHICH STORY  
IT IS!

THEY  
WOULDN'T PUT  
IT ON THE TEST  
UNLESS IT WAS  
A REAL WELL-  
KNOWN BOOK,  
RIGHT?

THEN IT'S  
SIMPLE,  
Y'KNOW?!



TAKE  
ANOTHER  
LOOK AT THE  
COVER.

*EEP. SHE'S LOOKING AT  
US LIKE WE'RE REALLY  
HOPELESS NOW.*





WHICH BRINGS US TO THE OBVIOUS CONCLUSION THAT THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN AT A TIME FAR PREDATING ITS CURRENT *BINDING*.

B-BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PAGE? THIS MOST DEFINITELY PREDATES MOVABLE TYPE!

PASTE-BOARD.

A MATERIAL THAT DIDN'T EXIST UNTIL 40 YEARS AFTER THE INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS.

THE FACT THAT IT'S HANDWRITTEN IS A TRAP LAID BY THE KAFNA TO MISLEAD THE EXAMINEES.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN IN AN OLD STOREHOUSE. AN OLD HANDWRITTEN BOOK THAT THE OWNER HAD REBOUND.

BEFORE THAT, COVERS WOULD HAVE USED WOOD AS THEIR BASE.

THE GOLD TOOLING?!

...WE COULD USE THE EMBOSSING.

BUT WOULDN'T IT BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO PIN DOWN WHEN IT WAS BOUND?


B...

DESIGNS WAX AND WANE IN POPULARITY WITH TIME. IN ANY GIVEN ERA, THERE ARE CERTAIN ONES THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN USE.

GOLD LEAF IS EITHER PRESSED ON WITH PALLETS AND PATTERNED STAMPS, OR ROLLED ON...

...WITH A FILLET OR ROULETTE.





IF WE CAN FIND A  
ROULETTE THAT  
MATCHES THE PATTERN  
ON THE COVER, WE'LL  
KNOW WHEN IT WAS  
IN FASHION AND THUS  
WHEN THE BOOK WAS  
BOUND.

BOOKS HAVE  
BEEN ADORNED  
IN COUNTLESS  
STYLES  
THROUGHOUT  
THE AGES.

SHE'S...

SHE'S  
INCREDIBLE!

IT'S NOT  
BLUSTER.

NATICA  
QUAPAN...

...HAS AN  
ARSENAL OF  
KNOWLEDGE  
THAT FAR  
OUTSTRIPS  
MY OWN.





JUST AS  
A TEST,  
TELL  
ME...

SWEET!

BUT THE  
ROULETTE  
CAN WAIT.

FIRST, WE  
SHOULD  
IDENTIFY THE  
LANGUAGE.  
WE'LL NEED AN  
ENCYCLOPEDIA  
OF LANGUAGES.

...OF THE  
NEW LUCENT,  
COLLEGIATE,  
AND NAYA...

...WHICH IS  
THE SUPERIOR  
REFERENCE?



HMPH!

I SEE YOU'VE  
AT LEAST  
MANAGED  
THE *FUNDA-  
MENTALS*.

I HAD  
NO  
IDEA  
...

THE  
COLLEGIATE IS  
UNSURPASSED  
IN TERMS OF  
BREADTH AND  
NUMBER OF  
LANGUAGES  
LISTED.



LEAVE THE  
ENCYCLO-  
PEDIA TO  
ME!

I'LL GO  
GRAB IT!

DASH







RIGHT! OF COURSE.

THEO, WAIT!  
SPEED'S  
IMPORTANT,  
BUT IT'S NEVER  
APPROPRIATE  
TO RUN IN A  
LIBRARY!



BUSTLE

BUSTLE

BUSTLE

BUSTLE



HOLY  
MAGUS,  
HE'S  
QUICK!

THEN I'LL  
SPEED-WALK  
MY WAY  
THERE!



I'D BETTER  
MAKE SURE  
WEUWEU CAN  
HANDLE IT.

JUST TO  
BE SAFE.

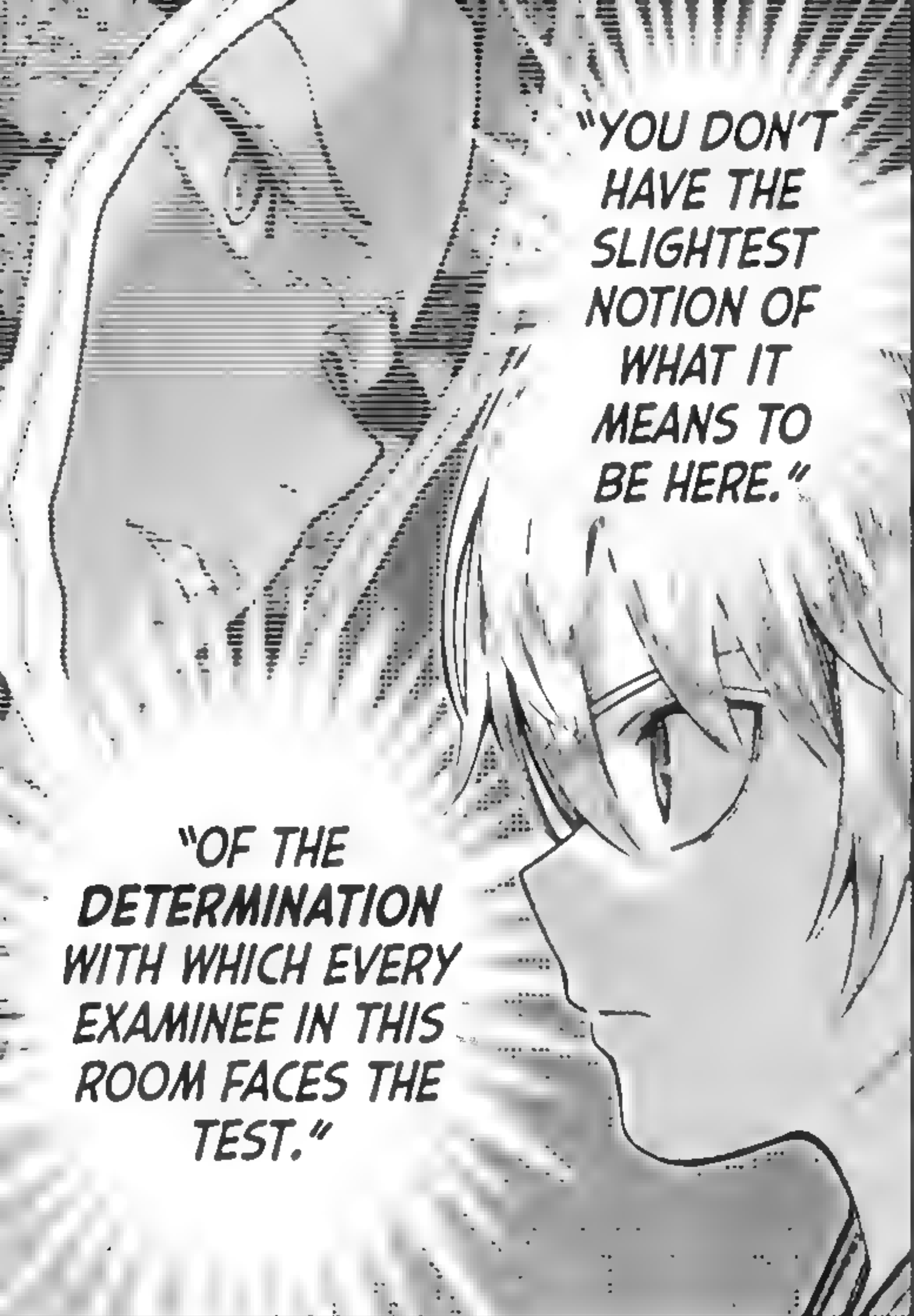
NO.

GREAT. WHILE  
THEO'S LOOKING  
FOR THE  
ENCYCLOPEDIA,  
WE CAN-

I'LL  
GO,  
TOO.

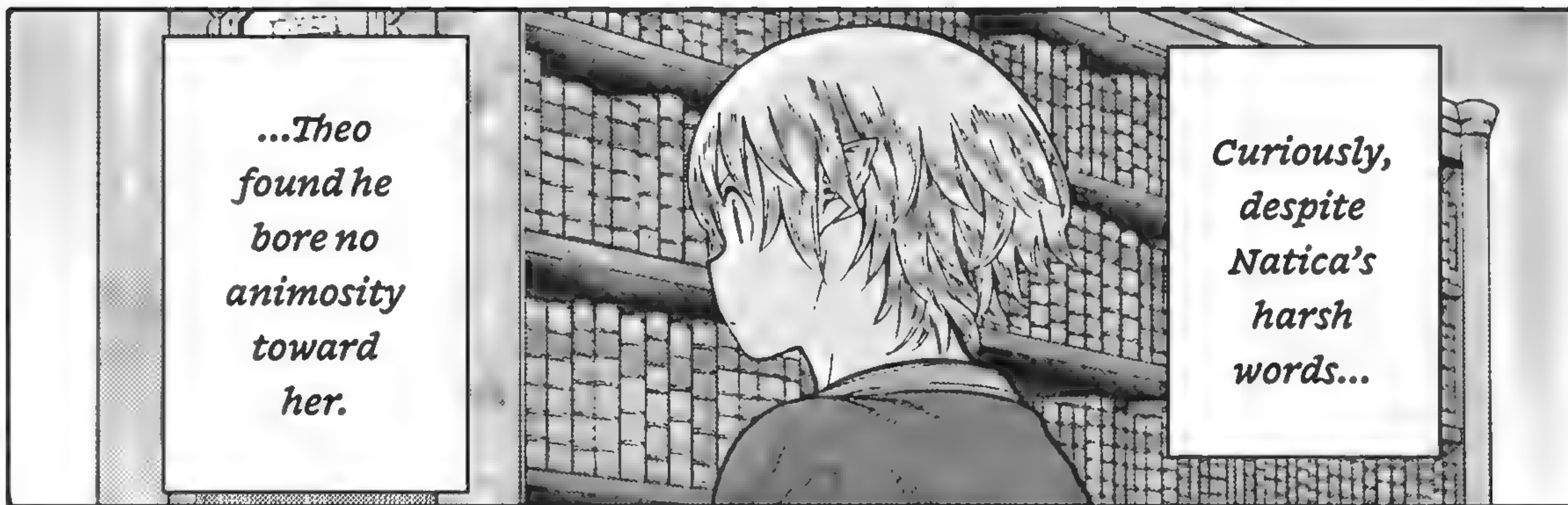
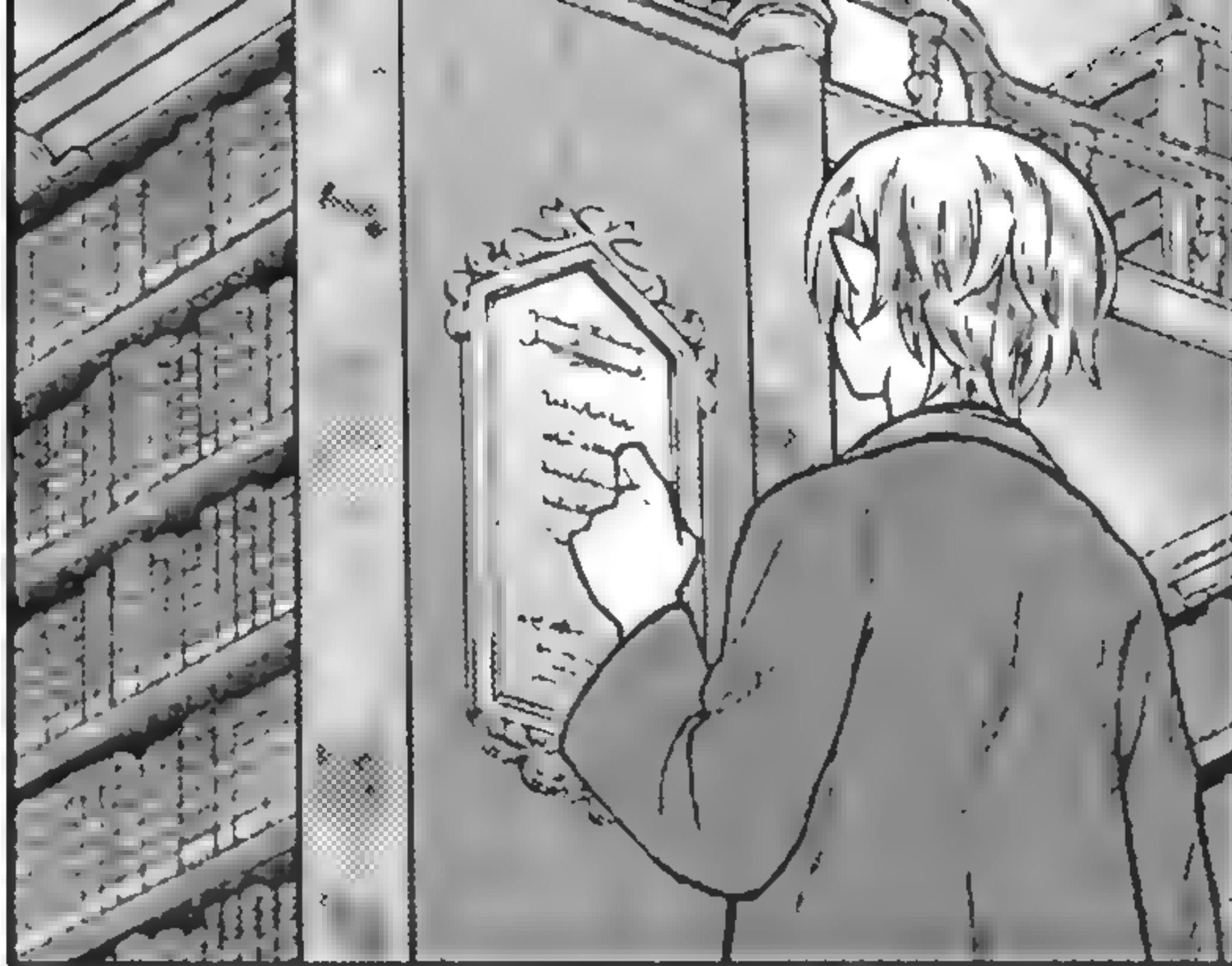
Look at  
him go!





"YOU DON'T  
HAVE THE  
SLIGHTEST  
NOTION OF  
WHAT IT  
MEANS TO  
BE HERE."

"OF THE  
DETERMINATION  
WITH WHICH EVERY  
EXAMINEE IN THIS  
ROOM FACES THE  
TEST."



...Theo  
found he  
bore no  
animosity  
toward  
her.

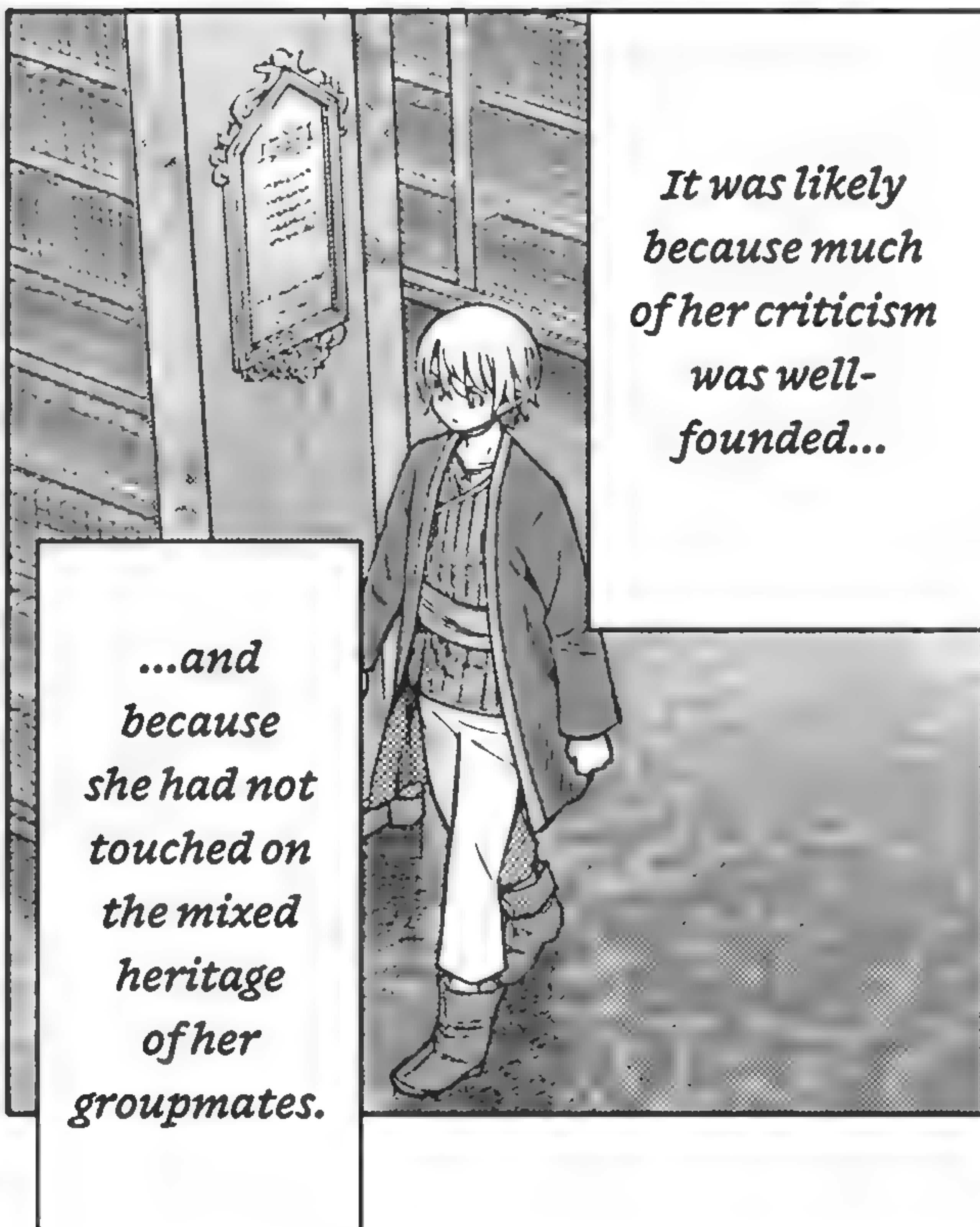
Curiously,  
despite  
Natica's  
harsh  
words...

NUCHI: A TERM FROM THE HYRON LANGUAGE WHOSE  
TRANSLATION IS NOT SUITABLE IN MODERN PUBLICATION.



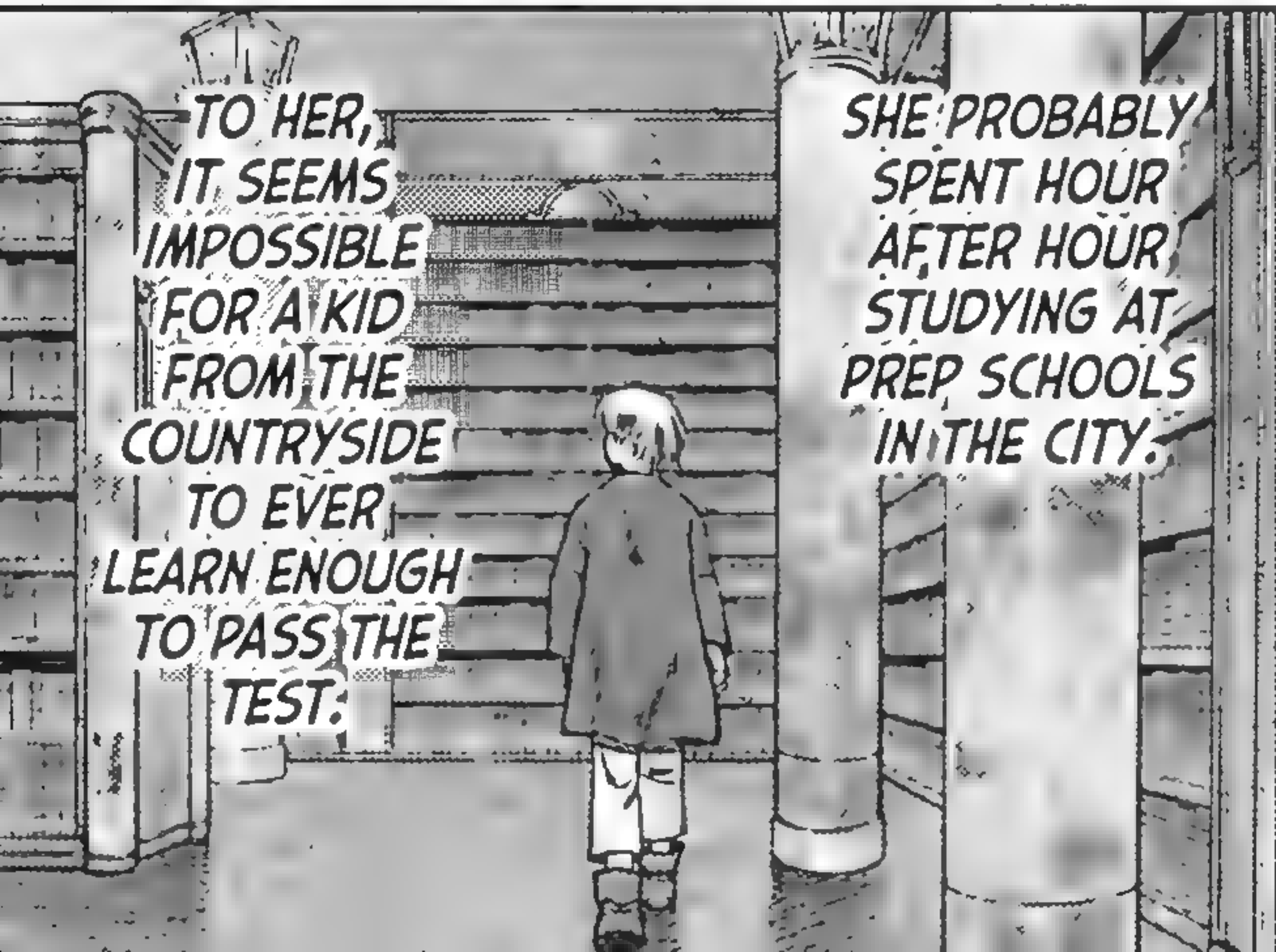
...BUT  
SHE  
DIDN'T  
BRING  
THAT UP  
AT ALL.

I HEAR A LOT  
OF PEOPLE  
STILL BELIEVE  
MIXED BLOOD  
IS A SOURCE  
OF NUCHI...



It was likely  
because much  
of her criticism  
was well-  
founded...

...and  
because  
she had not  
touched on  
the mixed  
heritage  
of her  
groupmates.



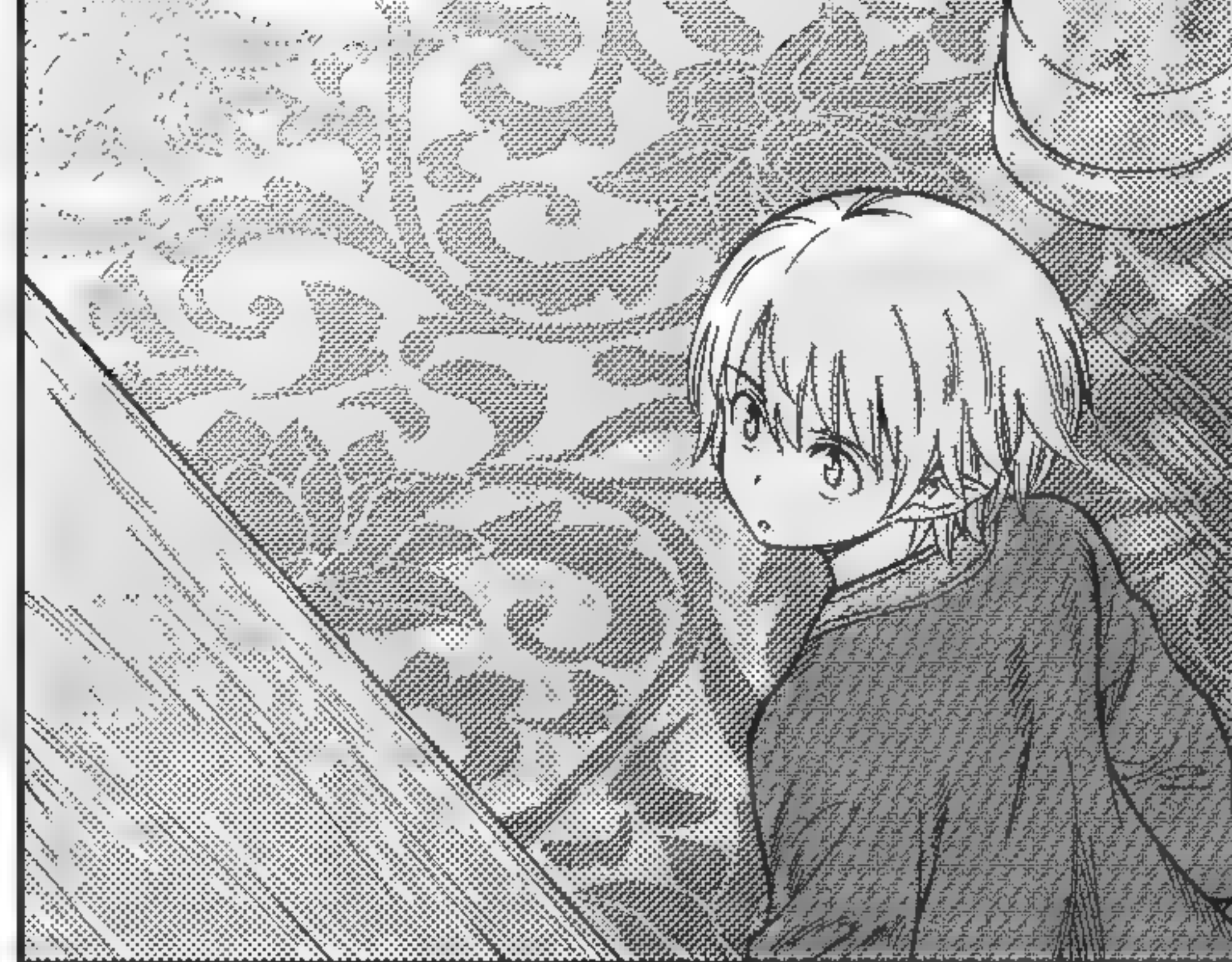
TO HER,  
IT SEEMS  
IMPOSSIBLE  
FOR A KID  
FROM THE  
COUNTRYSIDE  
TO EVER  
LEARN ENOUGH  
TO PASS THE  
TEST.

SHE PROBABLY  
SPENT HOUR  
AFTER HOUR  
STUDYING AT  
PREP SCHOOLS  
IN THE CITY.





THE  
COLLEGIATE.  
ONLY THREE  
COPIES LEFT  
ON THE SHELF.  
ONE FOR EACH  
OF US!



FOUND  
IT!



ONLY  
THREE?!



HUH?!

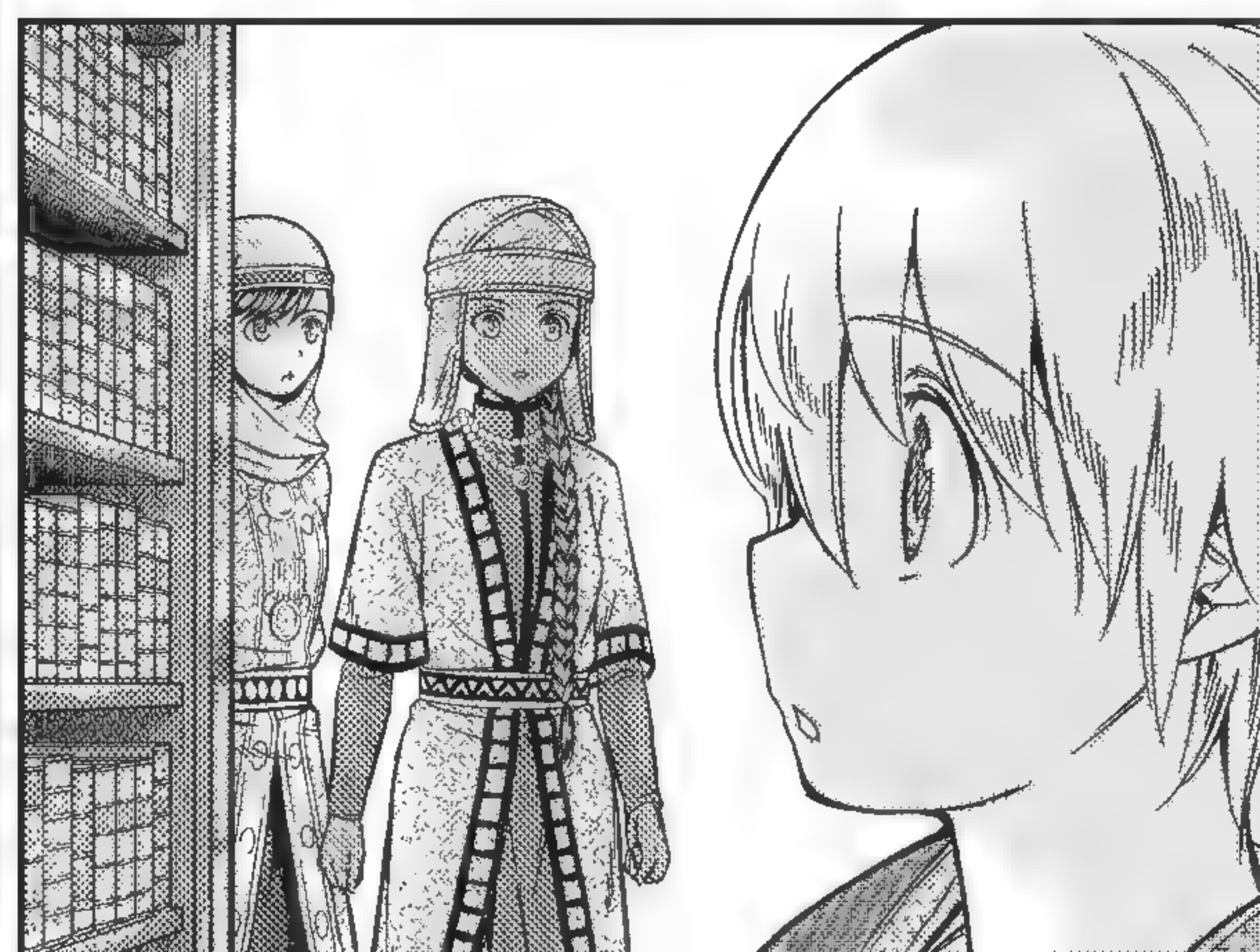
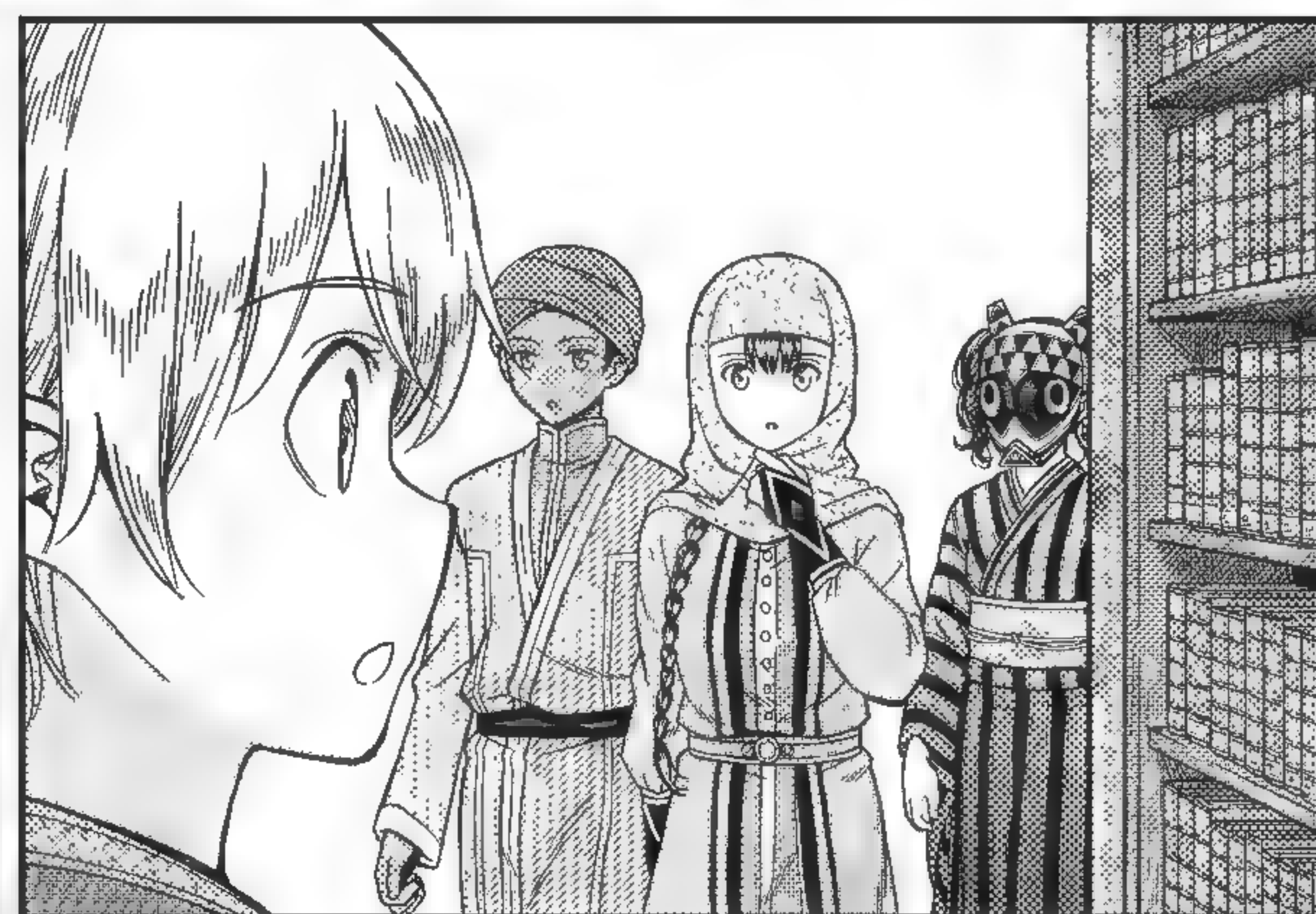


IT'S TRUE!  
THEY'RE  
ALL GONE!

ARE YOU  
ALL HERE  
ABOUT THE  
COLLEGIATE,  
TOO?

LOTS OF  
COPIES OF  
THE NAYA  
AND NEW  
LUCENT,  
THOUGH.

THAT'S  
RIGHT...







I CAME TO SEE  
IF YOU WERE  
DOING YOUR JOB,  
AND HERE I FIND  
YOU *SHARING*  
RESOURCES?!

HOLD IT  
RIGHT  
THERE!

WELL, WE  
CAN EACH  
TAKE ONE.  
HERE!

HUH?

BUT THERE'RE  
THREE COPIES,  
AND THREE  
GROUPS THAT  
NEED ONE.

IT  
WORKS OUT  
PERFECTLY.



HAVING  
THEM ALL  
READY  
IS THE  
LOGICAL  
CHOICE!

ALL  
THREE  
ENCYCLO-  
PEDIAS.

THREE  
COPIES  
EACH.



WE CAN  
KEEP THE  
COPIES  
WE'RE NOT  
READING AT  
OUR DESK.

WHAT KIND  
OF FOOL  
GOES OUT  
OF HIS WAY  
TO GIVE  
THEM UP?!



SWIPE

Give  
me  
those!

NITWIT! WE CAN  
SEARCH MORE  
QUICKLY WITH  
THREE COPIES!

YEAH!  
DUH!

THEY MIGHT  
CONTAIN  
CLUES  
THAT THE  
COLLEGIATE  
DOESN'T  
HAVE.

WELL, WHAT  
ABOUT THE  
NEW LUCENT  
AND NAYA? WE  
CAN TAKE ONE  
OF EACH.





AB-

SO-

LUTE-

LY

NOT!

WHY ABANDON  
YOUR OWN  
GOOD FORTUNE  
FOR AN  
OPPONENT?!  
YOU'RE  
SABATOGING  
YOURSELF!



I DON'T SEE  
WHAT'S SO  
FOOLISH  
ABOUT IT.  
THEY NEED  
COPIES, TOO.  
WE CAN EACH  
TAKE ONE!



SIMMER  
DOWN,  
YOU  
TWO.

HEY,  
NOW,  
THAT'S  
ENOUGH.

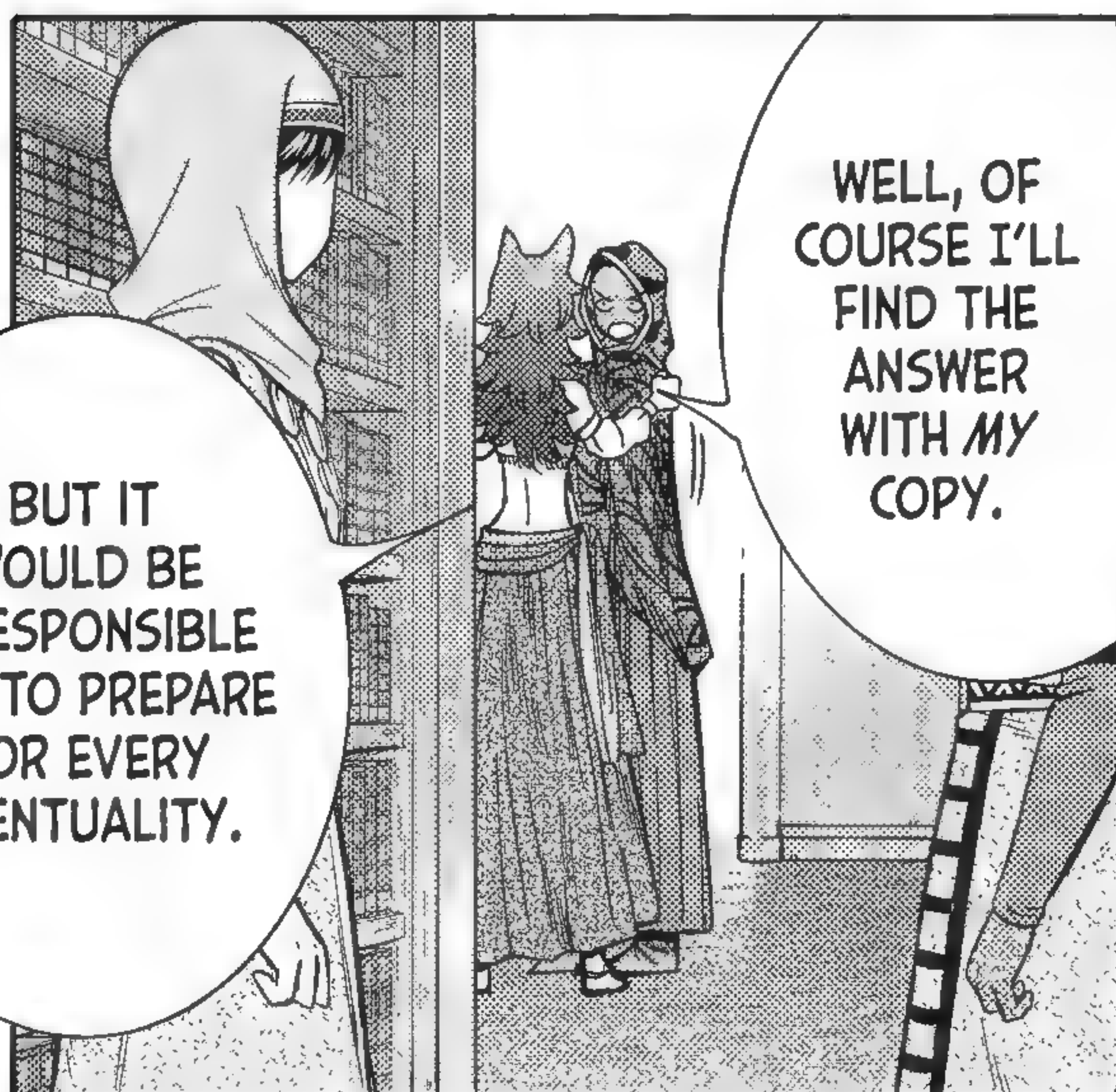




IT'LL ONLY  
TAKE A  
MOMENT.  
EVERYONE  
CAN JUST  
SIT TIGHT,  
Y'KNOW?

NATICA?  
LET'S HAVE A  
LITTLE CHAT  
OVER THERE,  
'MKAY?

WHAT  
IS THE  
MEANING  
OF THIS?!



BUT IT  
WOULD BE  
IRRESPONSIBLE  
NOT TO PREPARE  
FOR EVERY  
EVENTUALITY.

WELL, OF  
COURSE I'LL  
FIND THE  
ANSWER  
WITH MY  
COPY.



WITH YOUR  
BRAIN, WE  
REALLY ONLY  
NEED ONE EN-  
CYCLOPEDIA,  
RIGHT?

NOW  
HEAR ME  
OUT.

GET AWAY.  
YOU STINK.  
I HATE  
YOU.

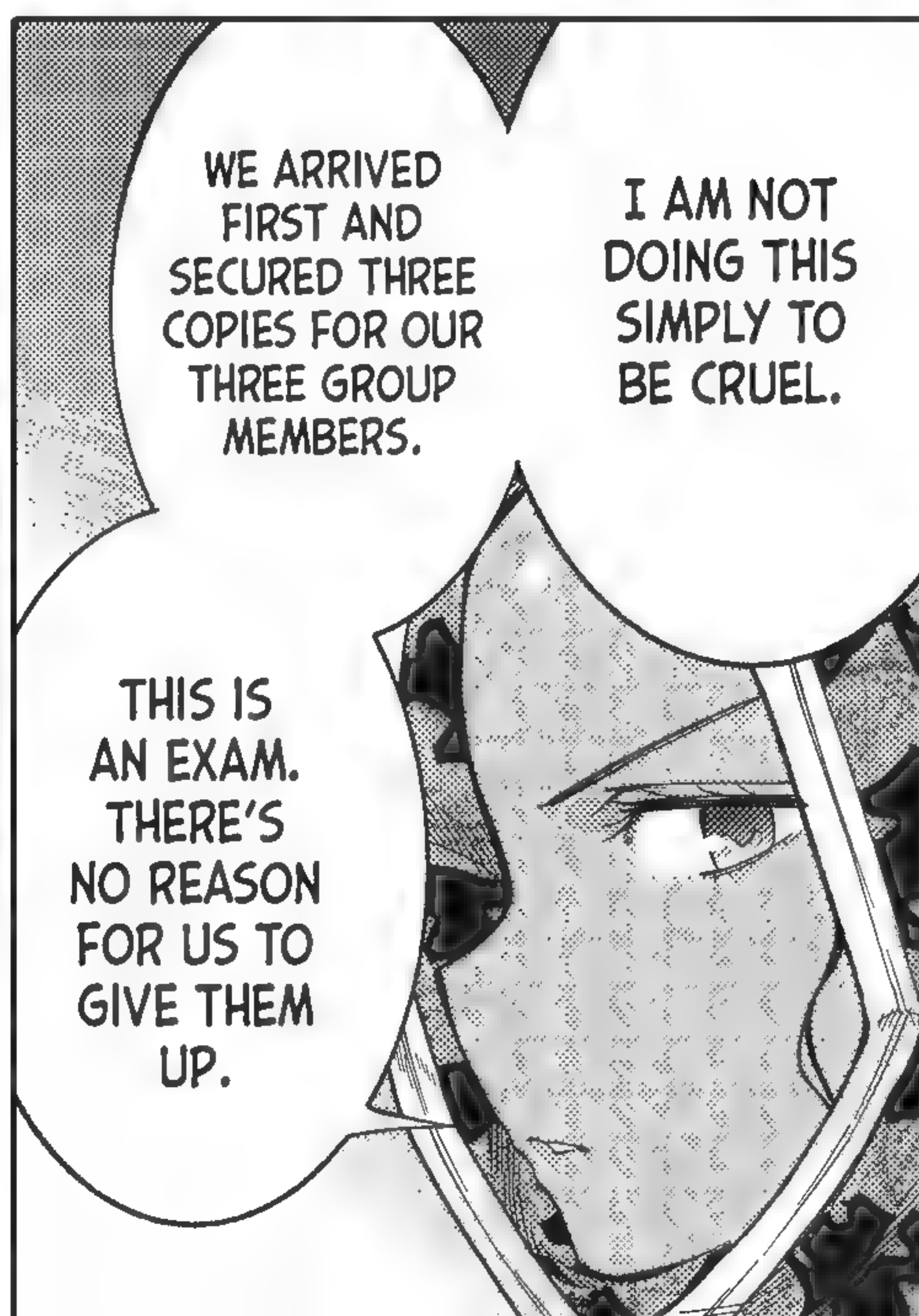


HEY,  
NATICA...

WHISPER...

TAKE A  
LOOK UP  
AT THE  
GALLERY.

WHISPER  
WHISPER...



WE ARRIVED  
FIRST AND  
SECURED THREE  
COPIES FOR OUR  
THREE GROUP  
MEMBERS.

I AM NOT  
DOING THIS  
SIMPLY TO  
BE CRUEL.

THIS IS  
AN EXAM.  
THERE'S  
NO REASON  
FOR US TO  
GIVE THEM  
UP.





AND  
THERE'S  
ANOTHER  
ONE.



SEE THE  
KAFNA UP  
THERE?



AND WAY  
IN THE  
BACK,  
TOO.

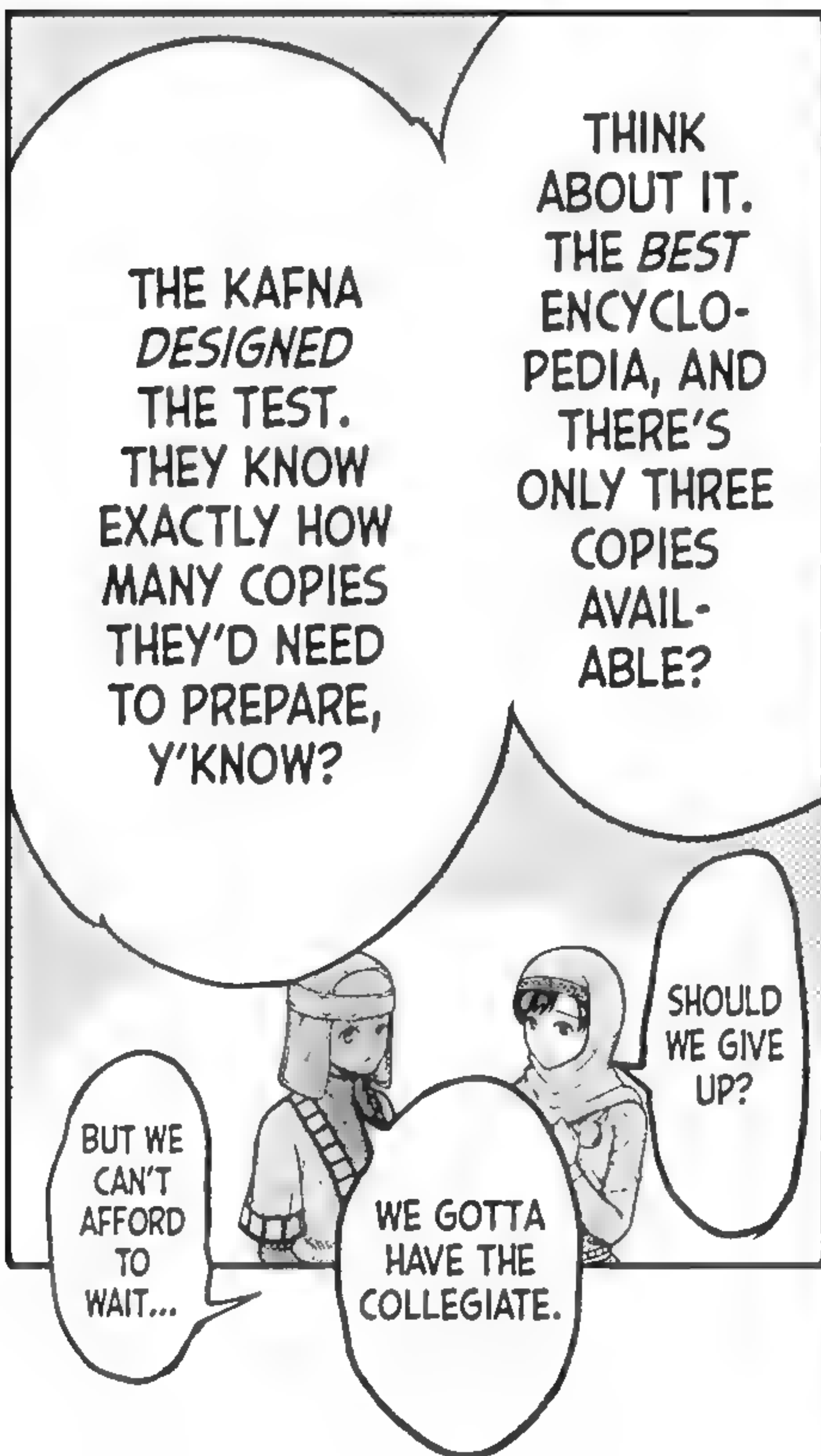


HOW DO  
YOU CHEAT  
ON A TEST  
LIKE THIS?

*Every  
group has  
a different  
task.*

WATCHING FOR  
CHEATERS,  
OBVIOUSLY.

THEY'VE BEEN  
WATCHING US ALL  
EVER SINCE WE  
WALKED IN THE  
DOOR.



THE KAFNA  
*DESIGNED*  
THE TEST.  
THEY KNOW  
EXACTLY HOW  
MANY COPIES  
THEY'D NEED  
TO PREPARE,  
Y'KNOW?

THINK  
ABOUT IT.  
THE *BEST*  
ENCYCLO-  
PEDIA, AND  
THERE'S  
ONLY THREE  
COPIES  
AVAIL-  
ABLE?

BUT WE  
CAN'T  
AFFORD  
TO  
WAIT...

WE GOTTA  
HAVE THE  
COLLEGIATE.

SHOULD  
WE GIVE  
UP?



IF YA ASK ME,  
OUR ANSWER  
ISN'T THE  
ONLY THING  
WE'RE BEING  
GRADED ON.



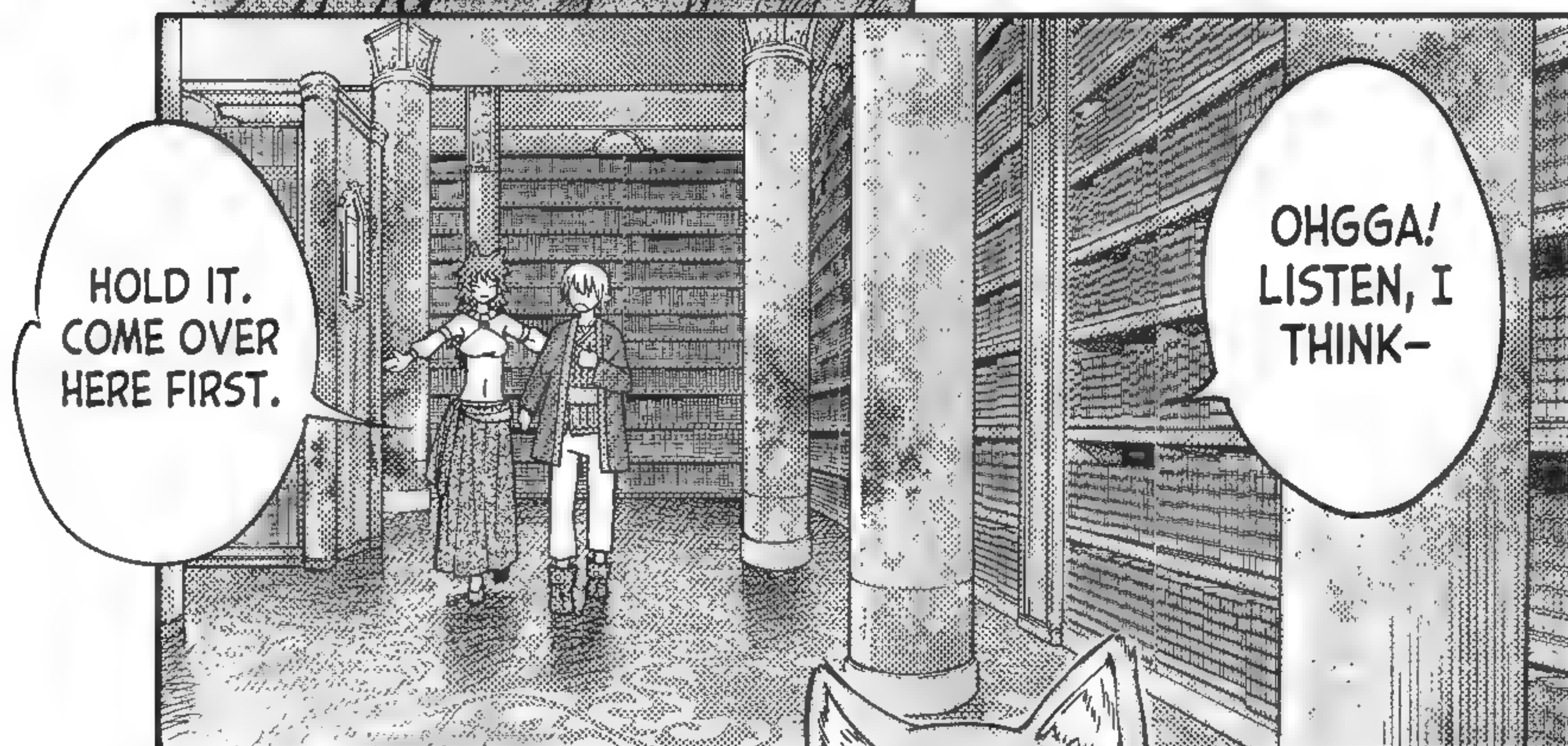


OF COURSE,  
THAT'S FOR OUR  
ILLUSTRIOUS  
GROUP LEADER  
TO DECIDE!



WHAT IF  
THEY ONLY  
PUT THREE  
ON THE  
SHELF ON  
PURPOSE?

IF WE SHARE  
INSTEAD OF  
HOARDING  
THEM ALL TO  
OURSELVES, IT  
MIGHT WORK  
OUT IN OUR  
FAVOR.



HOLD IT.  
COME OVER  
HERE FIRST.

OHGGA!  
LISTEN, I  
THINK—



HEY,  
THEO!



?!



...NATICA IS  
ABSOLUTELY  
AND  
UTTERLY  
CORRECT!



SURE,  
I SEE  
YOUR  
POINT.

DON'T  
YOU THINK  
NATICA'S  
TAKING  
THIS TOO  
FAR?!



A  
H  
E  
M

...BUT,  
THEO...





TESTS ARE  
ABOUT DOING  
WHATEVER  
IT TAKES TO  
SUCCEED!

EVEN IF IT  
MEANS SHE'S  
ACCUSED  
OF PLAYING  
FOUL! EVEN  
IF SHE HAS  
TO CLAW  
HER WAY TO  
THE TOP!



OUR GROUP  
LEADER IS  
GIVING ALL  
SHE'S GOT  
SO THAT THE  
THREE OF US  
CAN PASS!



GRIN



Y-YOU'RE  
RIGHT.

I'M ACTING  
ALL SANC-  
TIMONIOUS  
WHEN I CAN'T  
EVEN PULL MY  
OWN WEIGHT.

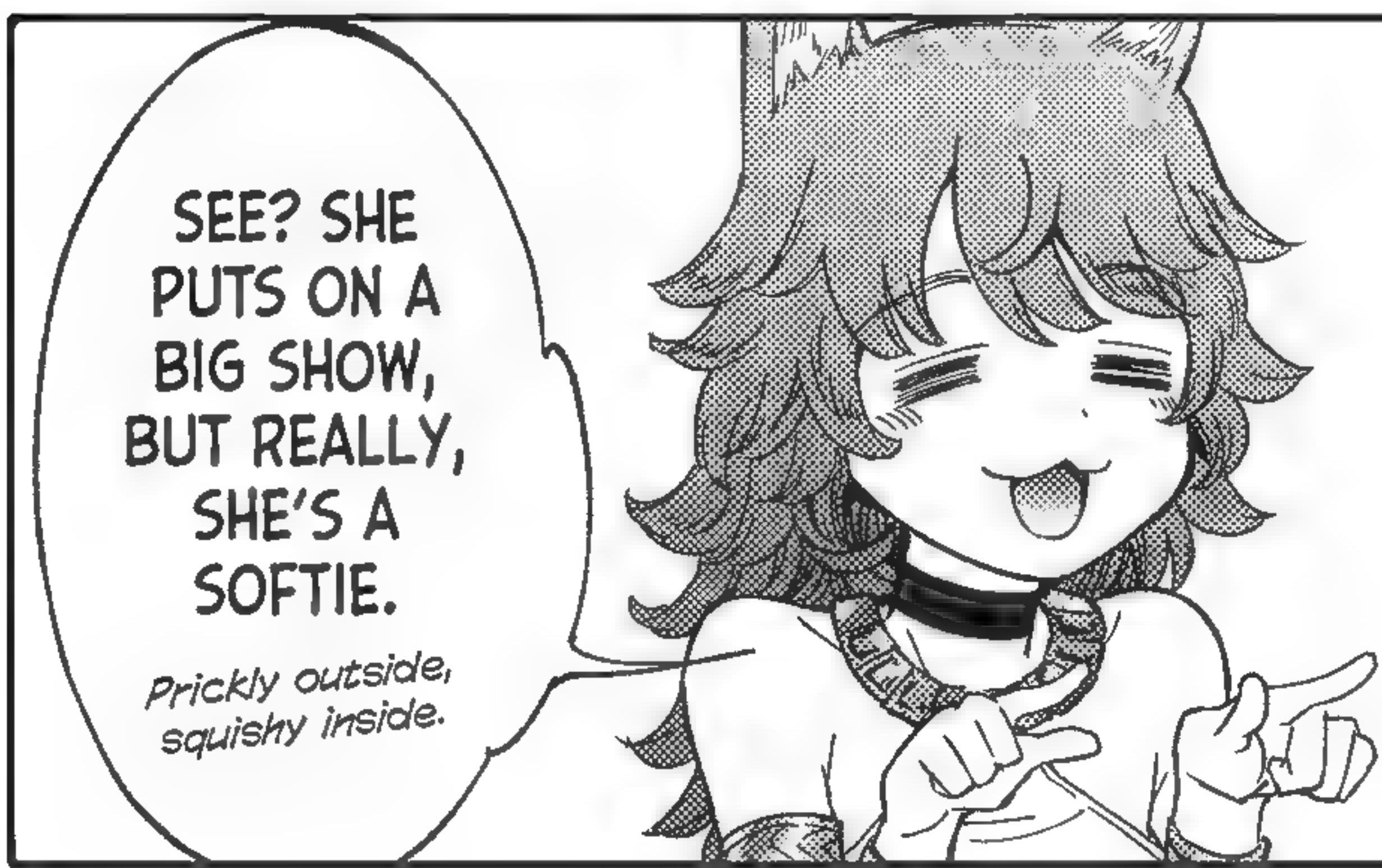


NATICA'S  
NOT QUITE  
AS COLD AS  
SHE SEEMS,  
Y'KNOW?

BUT HEY,  
CHECK IT  
OUT.



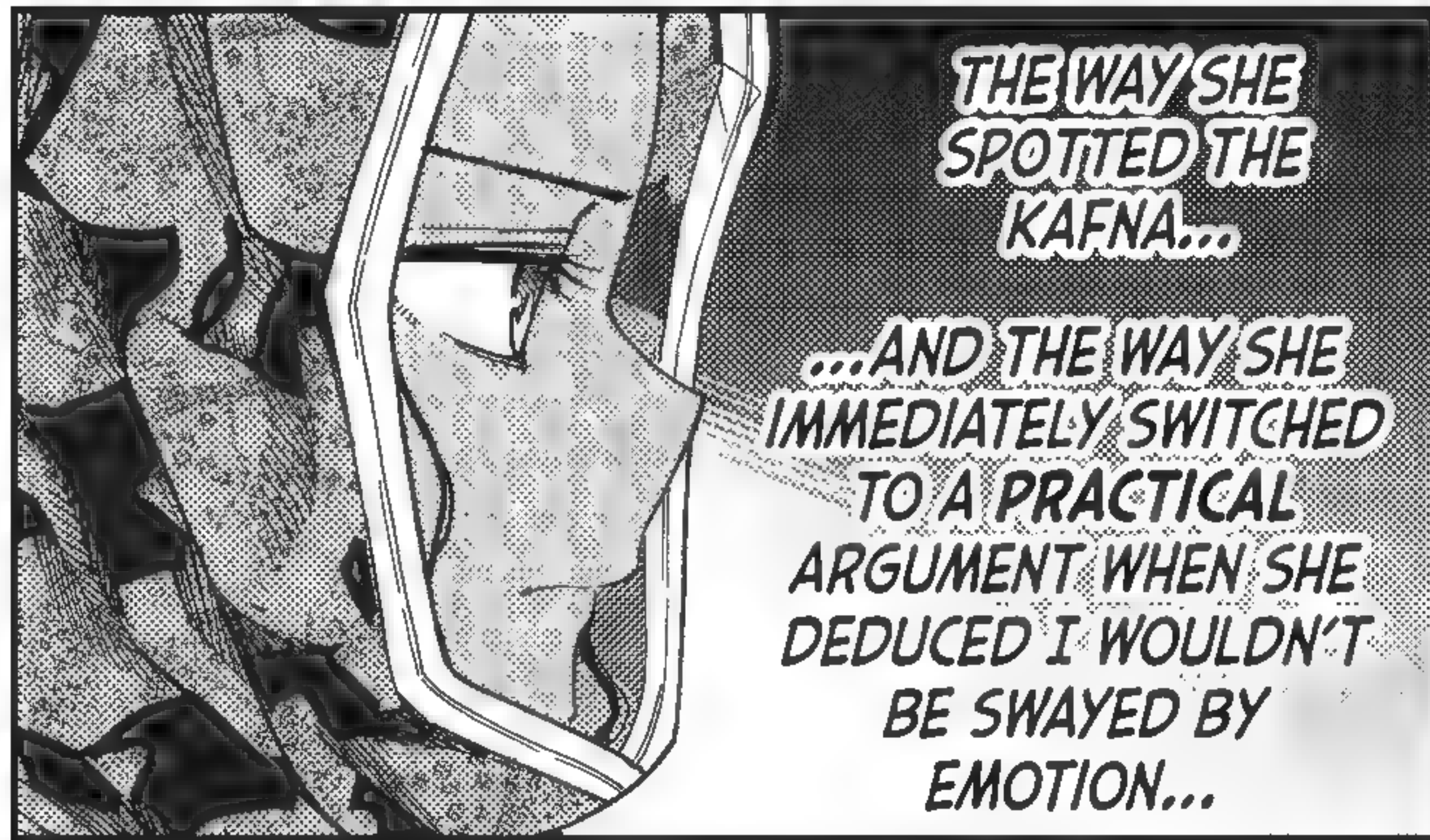




BRING COPIES OF THE NAYA AND NEW LUCENT.







THE WAY SHE  
SPOTTED THE  
KAFNA...

...AND THE WAY SHE  
IMMEDIATELY SWITCHED  
TO A PRACTICAL  
ARGUMENT WHEN SHE  
DEDUCED I WOULDN'T  
BE SWAYED BY  
EMOTION...



BUT IT  
WOULD SEEM  
SHE'S NOT  
AS FEATHER-  
BRAINED AS  
SHE LOOKS.

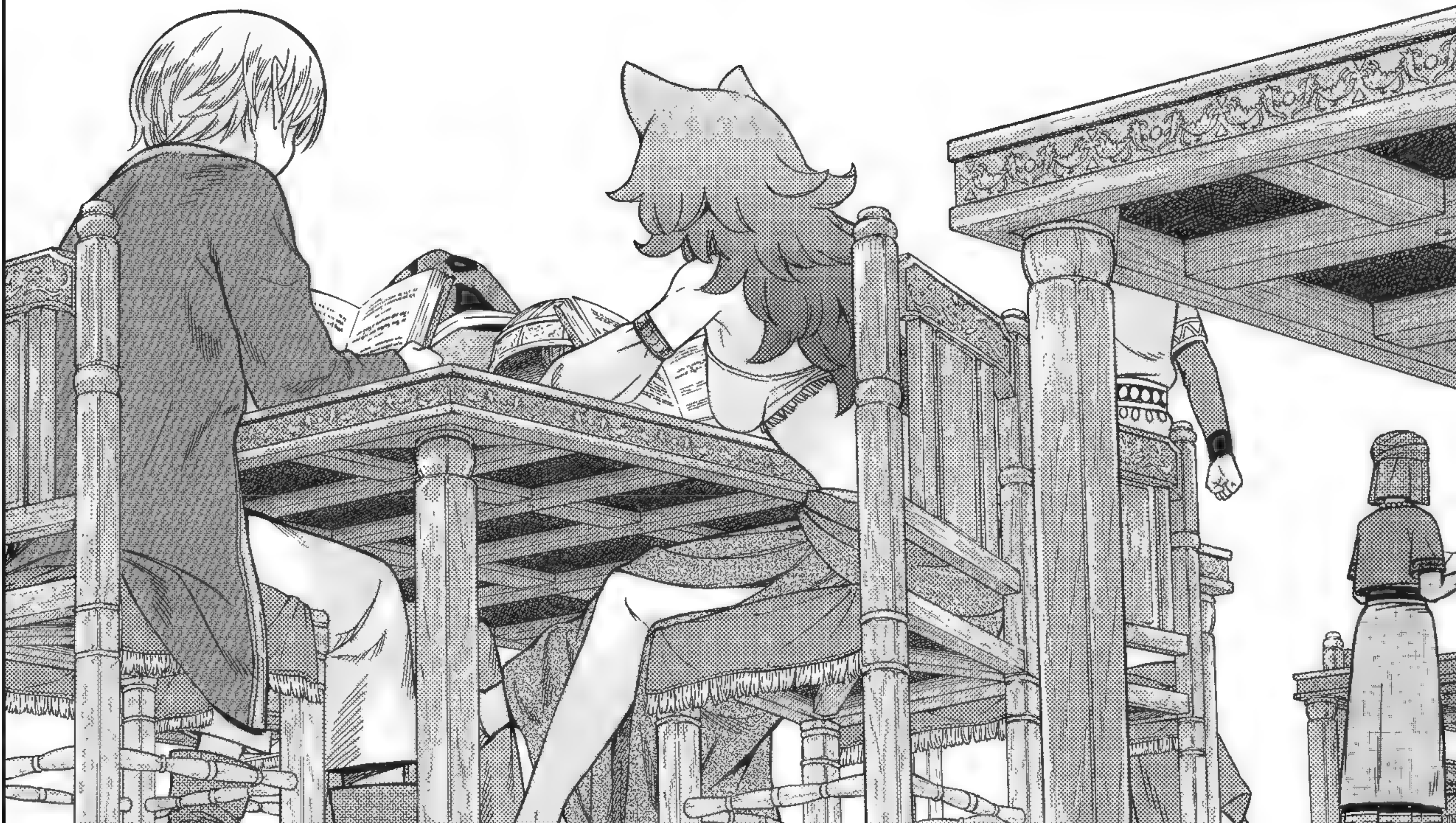
THAT LINE  
ABOUT  
HOW WE'LL  
BE GRADED  
PROBABLY  
CAME OUT  
OF THIN  
AIR.



HMPH. THE  
CHIPPER ONE  
CERTAINLY IS  
OBSERVANT.



*Ten minutes later...*







IT'S NOT  
IN HERE.

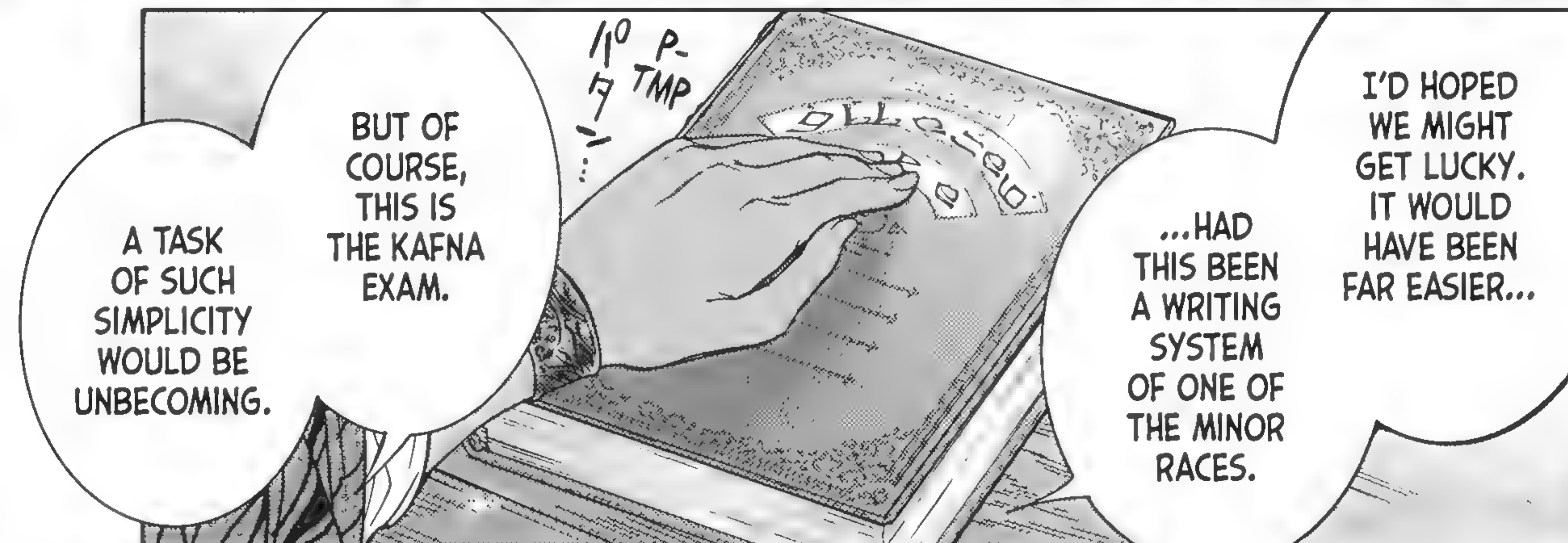
YOU  
FINISHED  
ALREADY  
?!



HMMM...

LOTS THAT  
LOOK *KINDA*  
SIMILAR, BUT  
THEY'RE NOT  
IT.

FLICK  
FLICK  
FLICK  
FLICK  
FLICK



A TASK  
OF SUCH  
SIMPLICITY  
WOULD BE  
UNBECOMING.

BUT OF  
COURSE,  
THIS IS  
THE KAFNA  
EXAM.

...HAD  
THIS BEEN  
A WRITING  
SYSTEM  
OF ONE OF  
THE MINOR  
RACES.

I'D HOPED  
WE MIGHT  
GET LUCKY.  
IT WOULD  
HAVE BEEN  
FAR EASIER...



WE'RE  
AFTER A  
TYPEFACE.

WE ARE  
NOT ON THE  
HUNT FOR  
AN OBSCURE  
LANGUAGE.



...WHAT  
ELSE IS  
THERE?

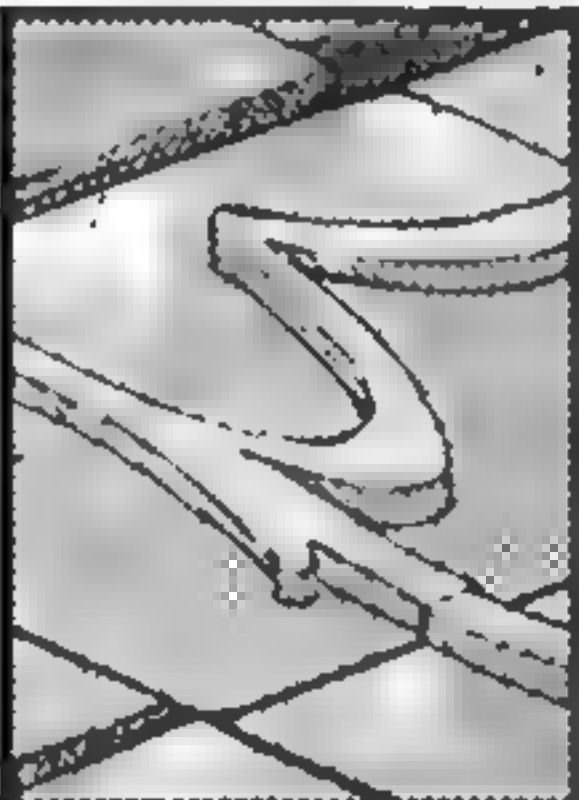
WHOA! HAVE  
YOU FIGURED  
OUT WHAT IT  
IS, NATICA?!

BUT IF IT'S  
NOT ONE OF  
THE MINOR  
LANGUAGES...



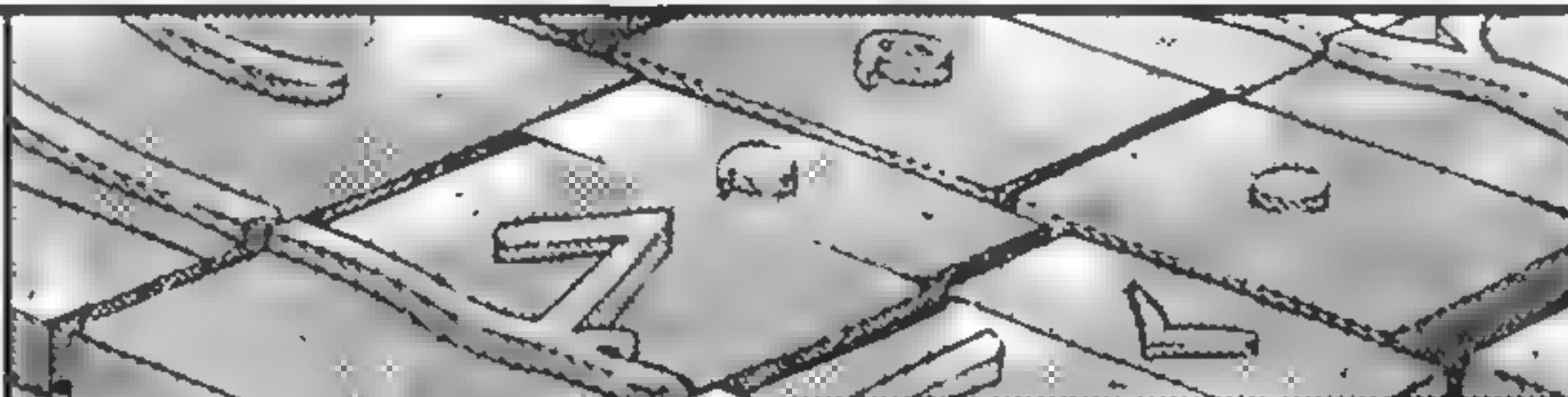
# Typefaces

# 書体



Each attempt to address these issues resulted in a typeface.

Ready legibility and optimal use of an inherently limited space were primary concerns in the development of printing techniques. Thus, letterforms were adjusted to be compact and easily recognized.



The advent of letterpress printing and cast-metal type ushered in a new era of more standardized letterforms. Which shapes prevailed was not a matter of happenstance.

Even a single writing system might have countless variations.



Prescribed Script, *The Sermons of Savana*, Year 145 Antecedent

Miniscule Script, *Chiquilla*, Year 64 Antecedent

Tunupan, *C*, Year 13 Antecedent

Handwritten, *the Beyond*, Year 72

Intian, *A Handbook of Jurisprudence*, Year 138

Handwritten

Handwritten

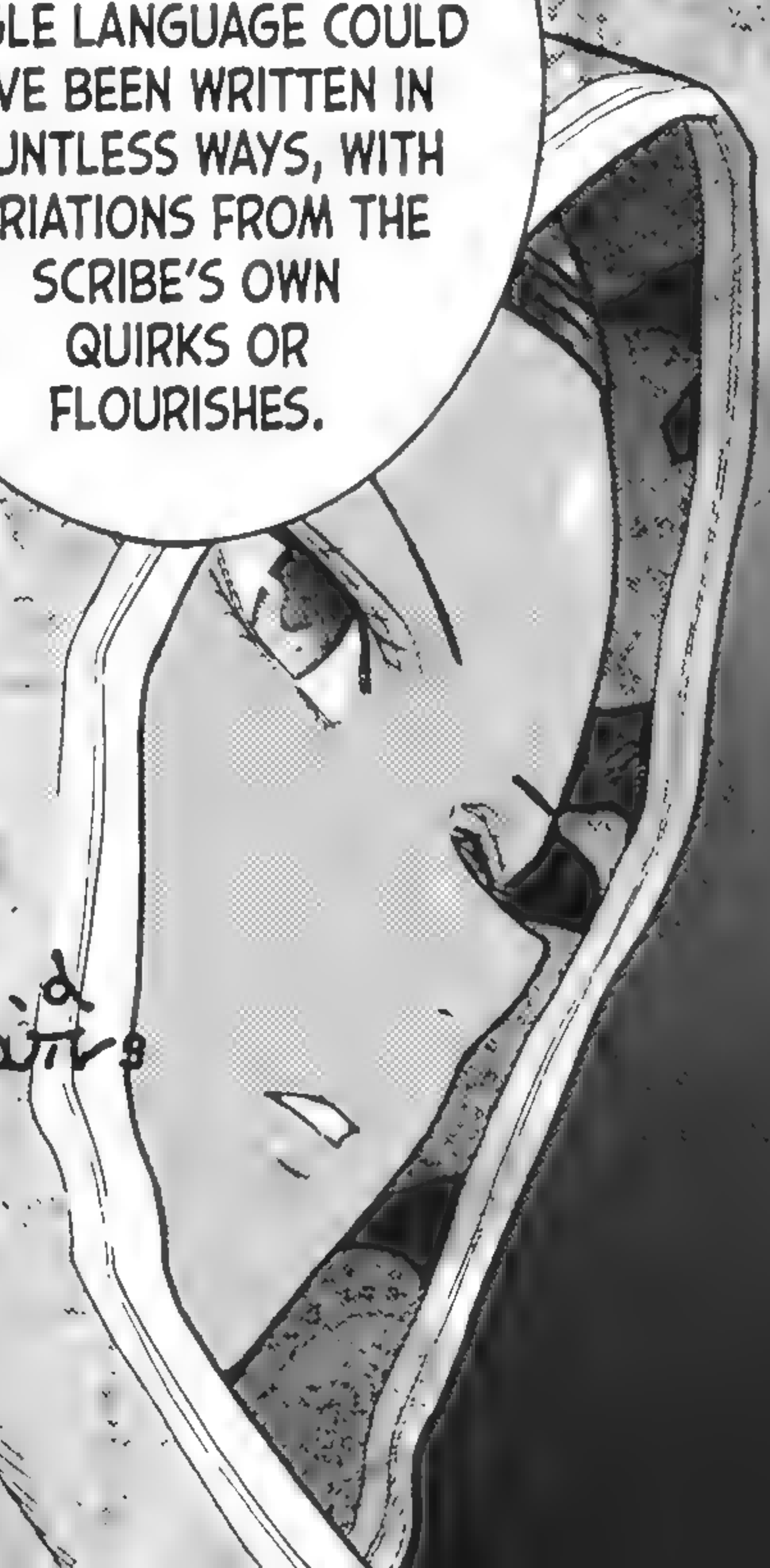
Handwritten

Intian, *A Handbook of Jurisprudence*, Year 138

AND UNTIL THE ADVENT OF LETTERPRESS, SOME 391 YEARS AGO, A SINGLE LANGUAGE COULD HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN COUNTLESS WAYS, WITH VARIATIONS FROM THE SCRIBE'S OWN QUIRKS OR FLOURISHES.

EVEN FOR A FLUENT READER OF HYRON LIKE MYSELF, THE VAST MAJORITY OF HANDWRITING STYLES IN EXISTENCE WOULD PROVE QUITE DIFFICULT TO READ.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely Hyron, showing various flourishes and variations.







...NOT ONLY  
MUST WE  
IDENTIFY AND  
CONVERT IT  
TO A MODERN  
FORM...

...WE WILL ALSO  
NEED TO TRANSLATE  
IT INTO A LANGUAGE  
WE UNDERSTAND.

FURTHER-  
MORE, IF THIS  
HANDWRITING  
IS NEITHER  
HYRON NOR  
CREYAK...



AND I  
HAVEN'T  
MANAGED TO  
CONTRIBUTE  
ANYTHING.

ON THE  
CONTRARY,  
I'VE  
SLOWED  
US DOWN.

FSSHHH



OHGGA'S  
RIGHT.

WE  
WON'T.  
NOT AT  
THIS  
RATE.



ARE WE  
EVER  
GONNA  
FINISH?

SERI-  
OUSLY?



CLATTER

IN ANY  
CASE, WE  
HAVE TO  
TRY.

IF WE  
DON'T DO  
SOME-  
THING...

LET'S GO FETCH  
REFERENCES  
WE CAN USE TO  
LOOK UP PAST  
LETTERFORMS.

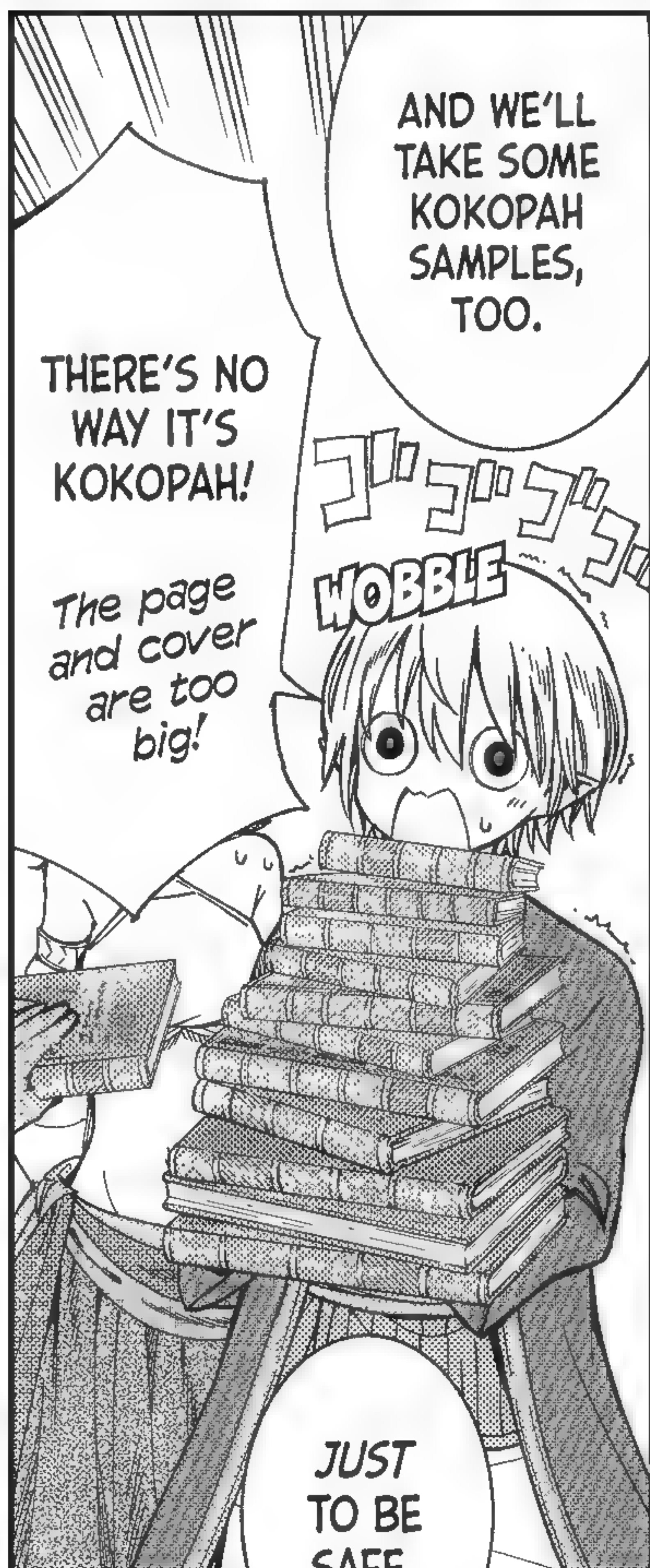
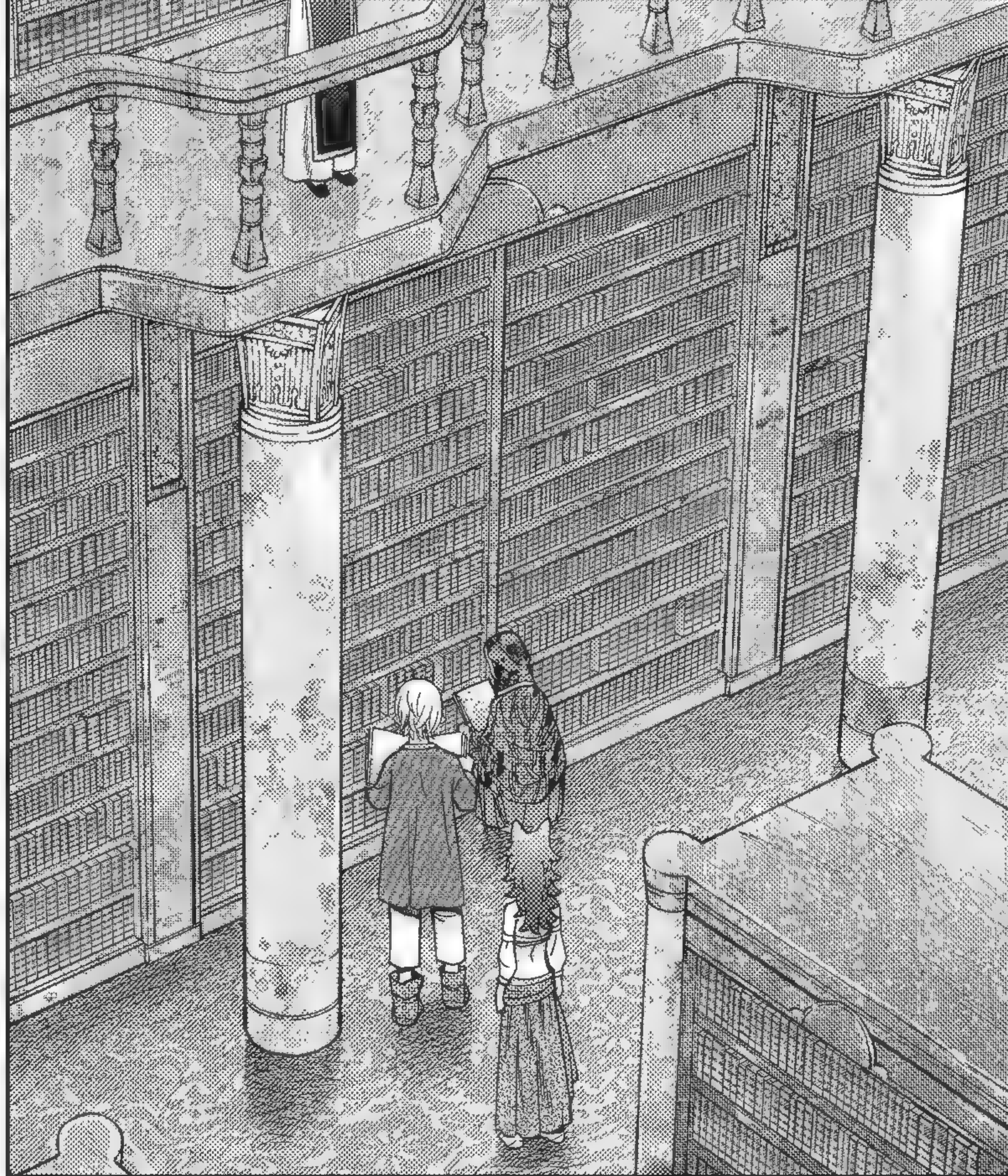
...WE'RE  
GOING  
TO FAIL  
BECAUSE  
OF ME!





WOW...

SO MANY  
VARIATIONS,  
EACH  
CAREFULLY  
ANALYZED.



AND WE'LL  
TAKE SOME  
KOKOPAH  
SAMPLES,  
TOO.

THERE'S NO  
WAY IT'S  
KOKOPAH!

The page  
and cover  
are too  
big!

BOBBLE

JUST  
TO BE  
SAFE.



AND  
THEN  
THERE'S  
CREYAK  
...

...AND  
KADOE,  
TOO.

HUH?!

THE KADOE  
WRITE  
VERTICALLY.  
I DON'T  
THINK WE  
NEED TO-

JUST  
TO BE  
SAFE.



THE THREE  
LINGUISTIC  
PILLARS: RAKTA,  
HAUPI, AND  
HYRON.

WHUMP  
WHUMP





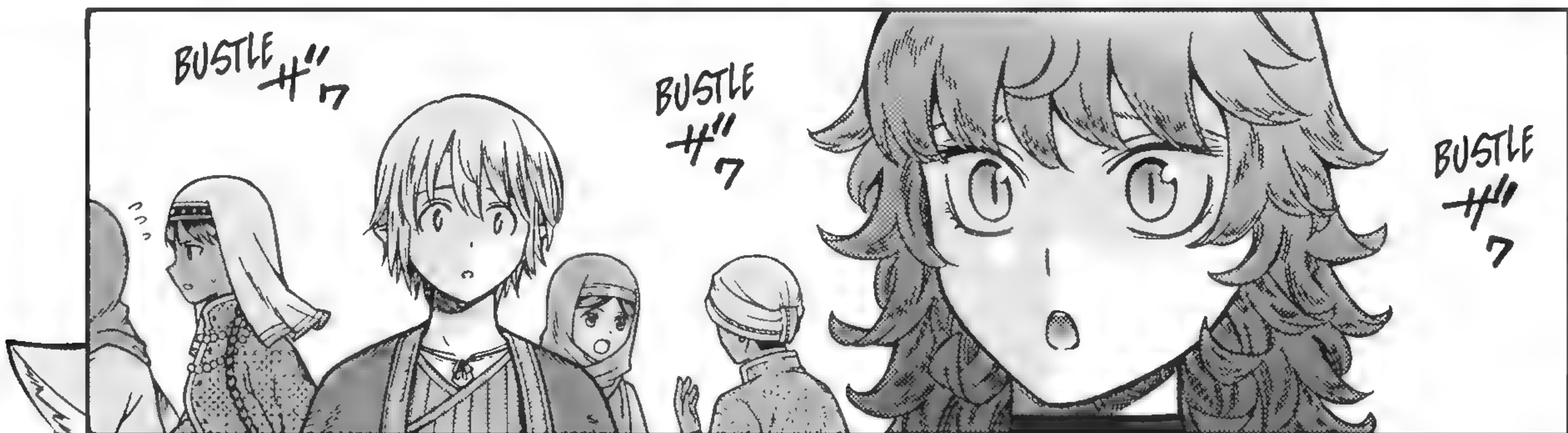
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO BE MISSING ANY POTENTIAL RESOURCES.

I WILL GO TO ASCERTAIN WE ARE NOT.

ALL RIGHT, THEN. NEXT, I'LL GO FIND A GUIDE TO ROULETTES.

YOU SHOULD BE HERE. YOU'RE THE FASTEST AT SKIMMING THE ENTRIES!

SEND ME OR THEO FOR THAT!



BUSTLE

BUSTLE

BUSTLE

BUT THAT'S NOT THE ONLY ISSUE HERE.

ME, EITHER.

IT'S MY FAULT. I HAVE NO WAY TO CONTRIBUTE.

I'M GETTING THE FEELING...

...THAT WE'RE GOING TO FAIL BASED ON TIME.

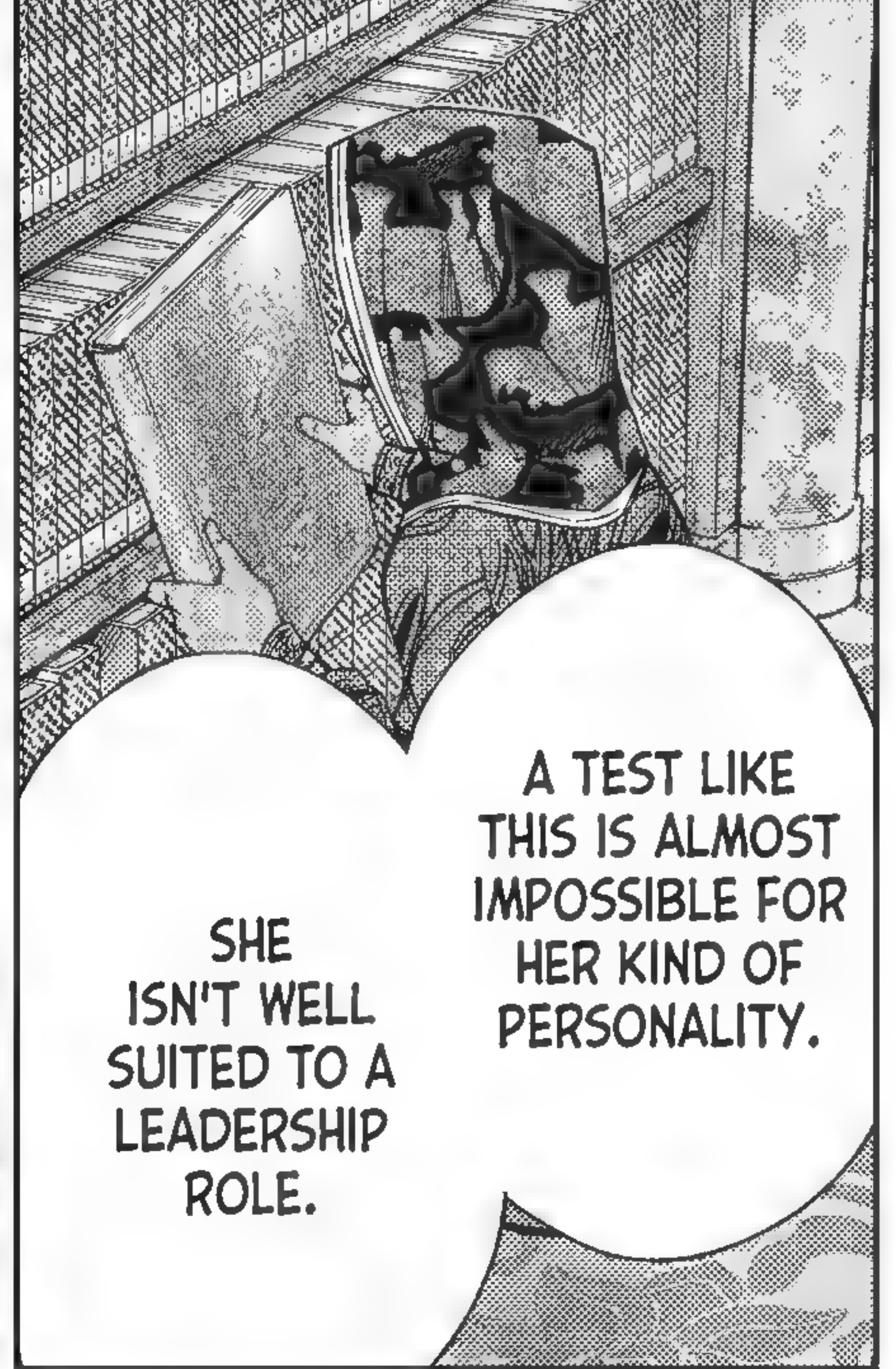
SHE'S NOT SAFE. SHE'S EXCESSIVE.





REALLY, WE  
NEED TO  
BE PULLING  
HER ALONG.  
WE HAVE TO  
DIRECT HER  
EFFORTS.

ABILITY LIKE  
HERS SHINES  
MOST BRIGHTLY  
WHEN IT'S  
NEXT TO OTHER  
CAPABLE  
INDIVIDUALS.



SHE  
ISN'T WELL  
SUITED TO A  
LEADERSHIP  
ROLE.

A TEST LIKE  
THIS IS ALMOST  
IMPOSSIBLE FOR  
HER KIND OF  
PERSONALITY.



UM, I  
MEAN,  
JUST A  
THOUGHT,  
Y'KNOW?

*Man, this  
test is  
rough!*



...!



YES,  
MA'AM!

YOU'RE PART  
CREYAK, SO YOU  
START WITH THE  
CREYAK ONES.



HERE. GUIDES  
TO ROULETTES  
USED BY EACH  
RACE.

...PULL  
NATICA  
ALONG,  
HUH?

WE  
HAVE  
TO...





NO! WHAT  
IF WE PICK  
THE WRONG  
ONE?

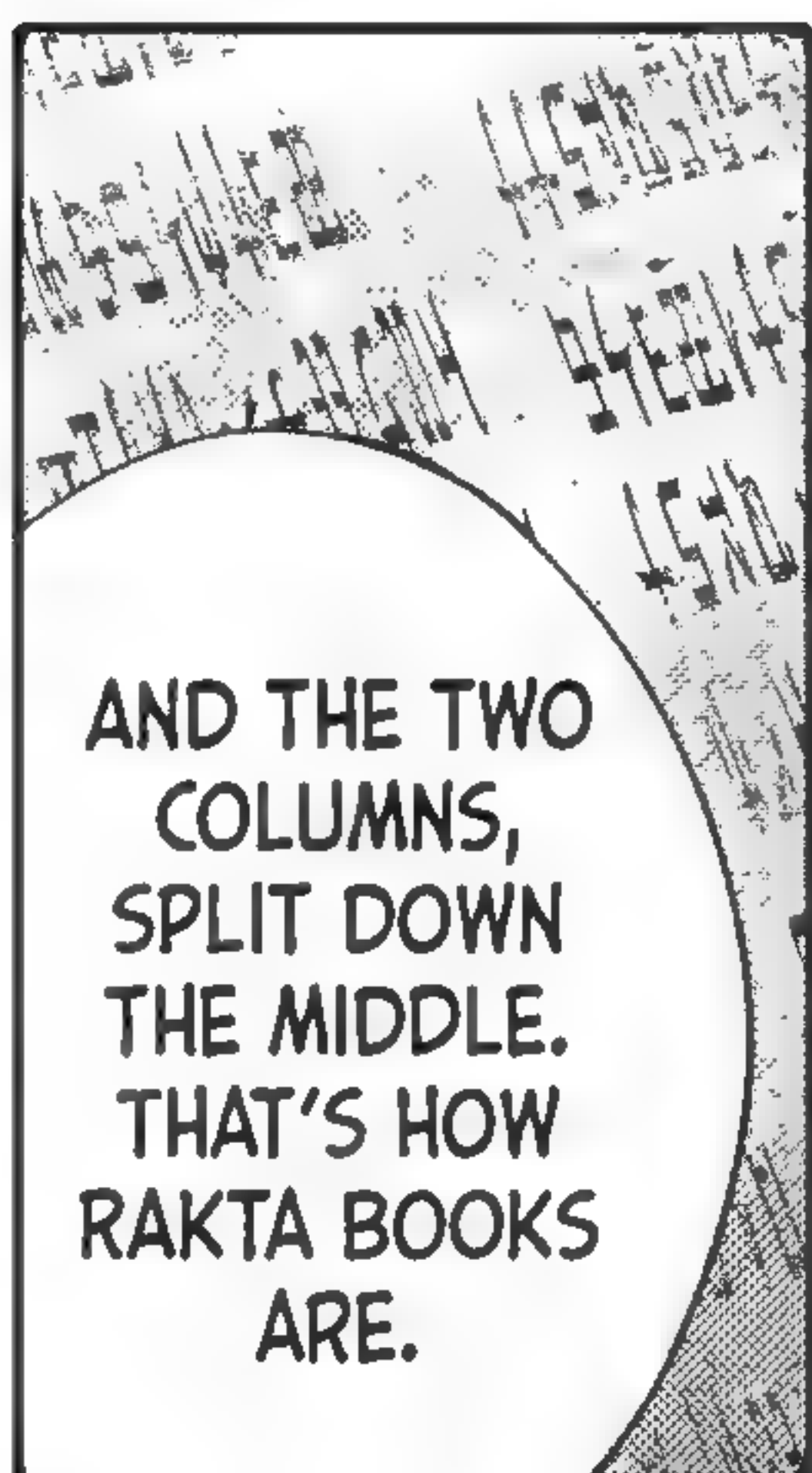


WE DON'T  
HAVE THAT  
KIND OF TIME.  
SHOULDN'T WE  
NARROW IT  
DOWN TO ONE  
LANGUAGE?

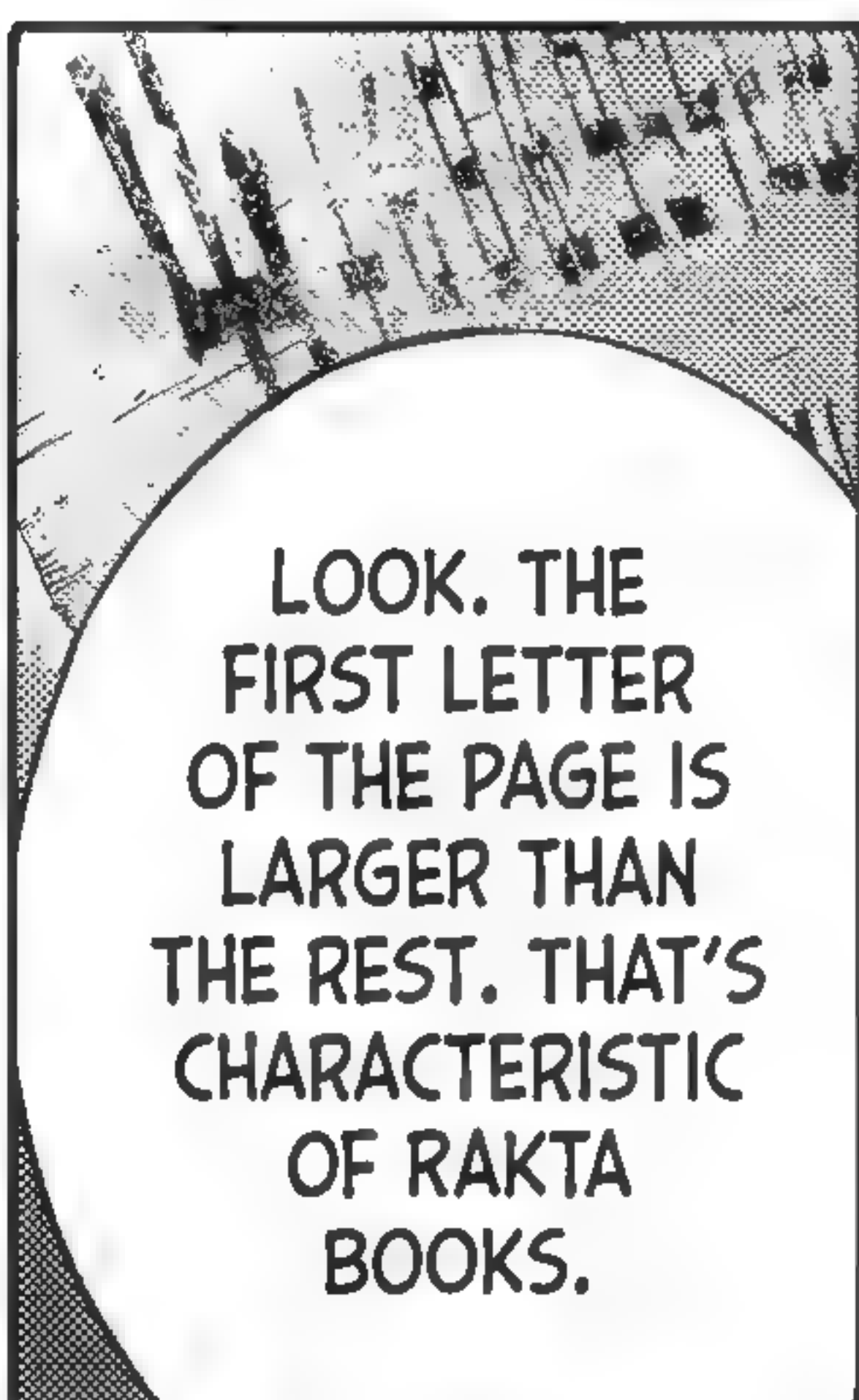


AND AS  
FOR THE  
TYPEFACES...

I'LL TAKE  
RAKTA, AND  
YOU TAKE  
HYRON.



AND THE TWO  
COLUMNS,  
SPLIT DOWN  
THE MIDDLE.  
THAT'S HOW  
RAKTA BOOKS  
ARE.



LOOK. THE  
FIRST LETTER  
OF THE PAGE IS  
LARGER THAN  
THE REST. THAT'S  
CHARACTERISTIC  
OF RAKTA  
BOOKS.



BUT...  
THIS SEEMS  
LIKE RAKTA  
WRITING TO  
ME.

I THINK  
WE SHOULD  
FOCUS ON  
RAKTA.



...YEAH.

I  
GUESS  
NOT...



THE RAKTA  
ARE THE  
DRIVING FORCE  
OF WRITTEN  
CIVILIZATION.

EVERY BOOK  
ON THE  
CONTINENT HAS  
SOME TRACE  
OF RAKTA  
INFLUENCE. SO  
WE CAN'T BE  
CERTAIN.

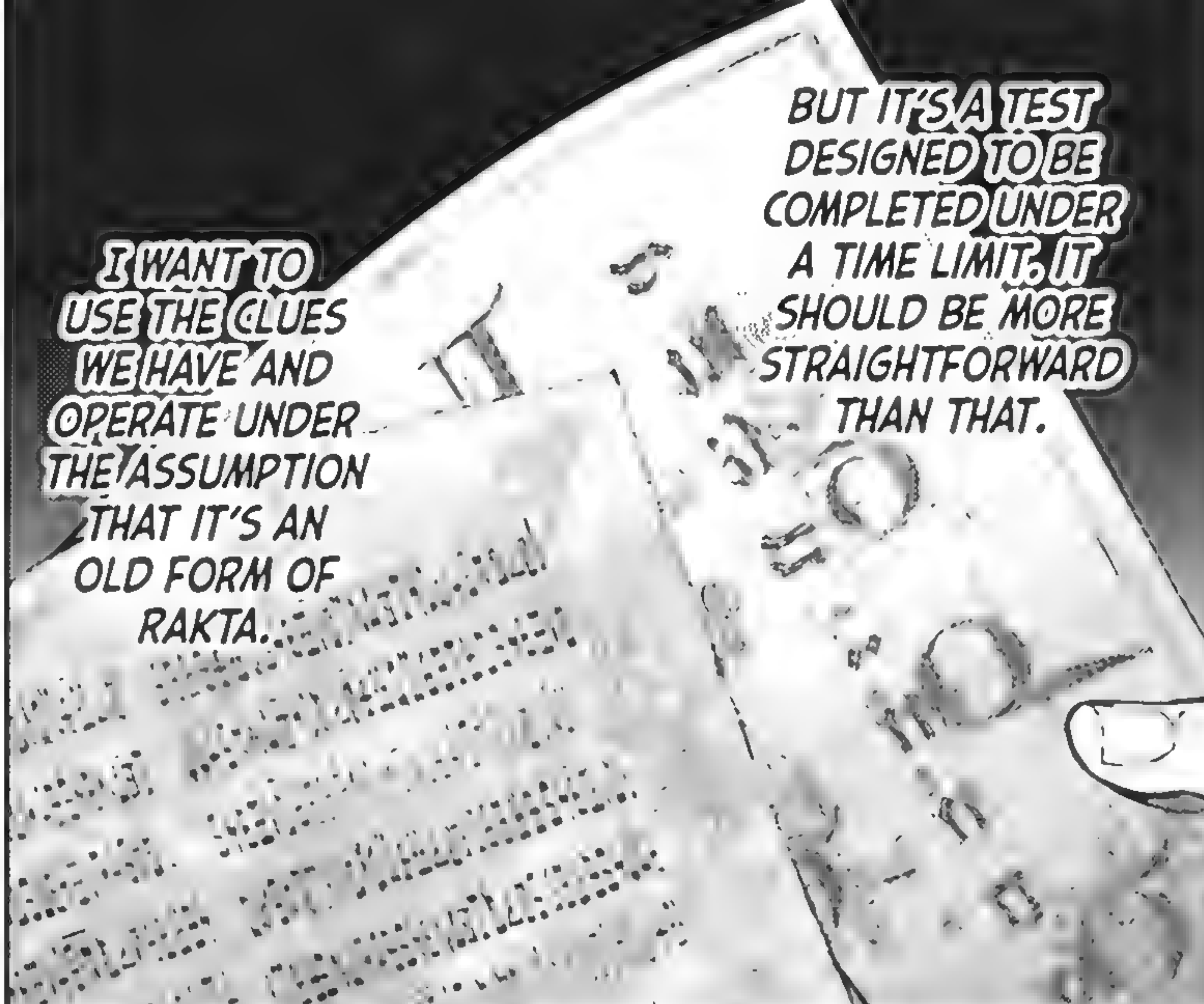
THEY DEVELOPED  
BOUND BOOKS  
IN A TIME WHEN  
SCROLLS WERE  
THE NORM. AND  
THEY INVENTED  
THE FIRST  
PRESSES, TOO.





BUT NATICA  
WILL ARGUE...

...I'M BEING  
NAÏVE, AND  
THAT WILL BE  
THE END OF  
THAT.



I WANT TO  
USE THE CLUES  
WE HAVE AND  
OPERATE UNDER  
THE ASSUMPTION  
THAT IT'S AN  
OLD FORM OF  
RAKTA.

BUT IT'S A TEST  
DESIGNED TO BE  
COMPLETED UNDER  
A TIME LIMIT. IT  
SHOULD BE MORE  
STRAIGHTFORWARD  
THAN THAT.



SO MAYBE WE  
SHOULD AVOID THE  
RISK BY EVALUATING  
ALL POSSIBILITIES  
EQUALLY. EVEN IF IT  
TAKES MORE TIME.

IF WE ACT  
BASED ON A  
HUNCH, AND  
THAT HUNCH  
TURNS OUT  
WRONG, WE  
WOULDN'T  
BE ABLE TO  
RECOVER.

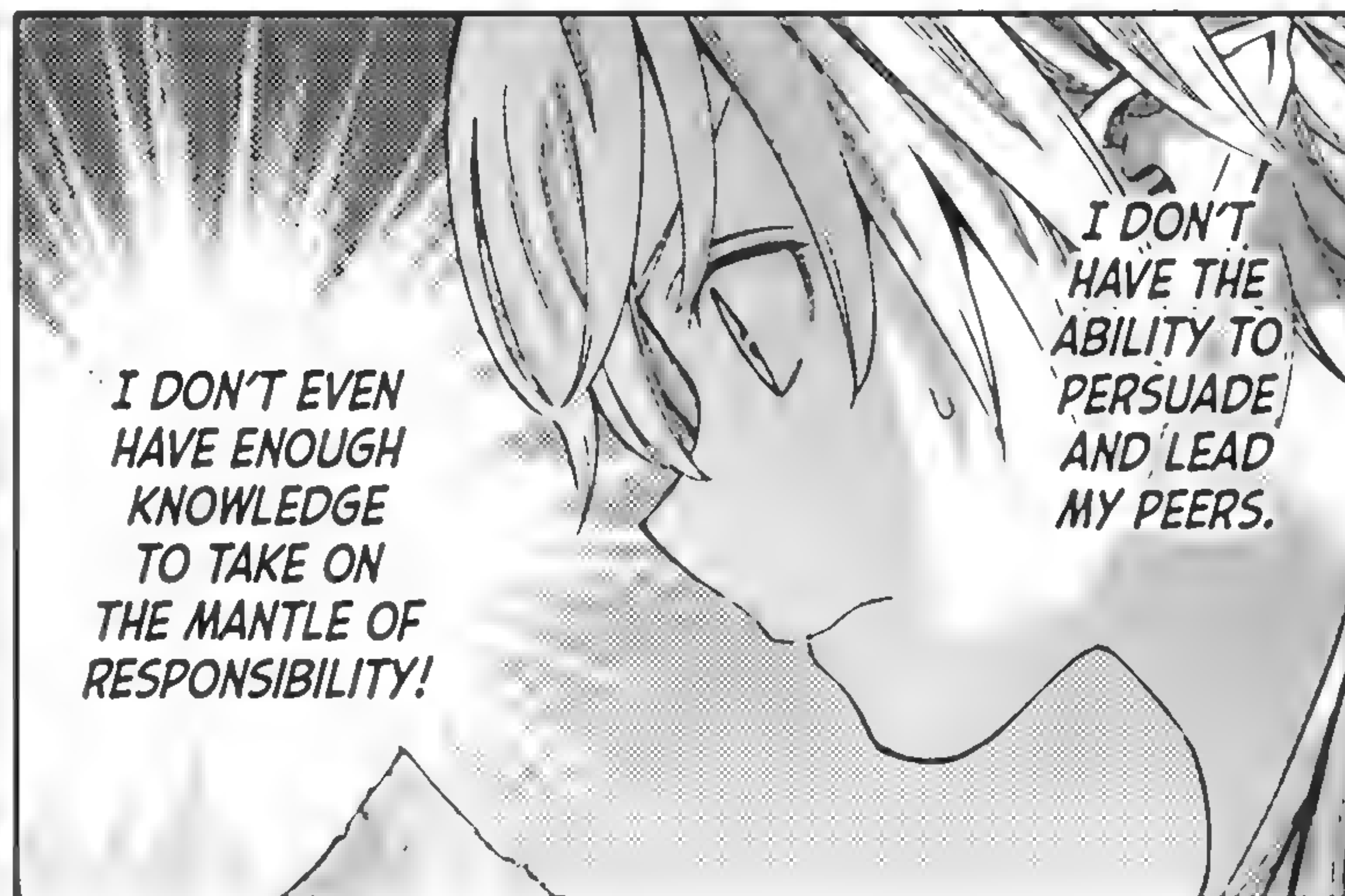
I MIGHT  
JUST BE  
RUINING  
ALL OUR  
CHANCES  
WITH MY  
DUMB  
OPINIONS.

WHEN IF WE'D  
JUST DONE  
WHAT NATICA  
SAID, WE  
COULD HAVE  
FINISHED.



...

FLICK  
1/10  
FLICK  
1/10  
FLICK  
1/10  
FLICK  
1/10



I DON'T EVEN  
HAVE ENOUGH  
KNOWLEDGE  
TO TAKE ON  
THE MANTLE OF  
RESPONSIBILITY!

I DON'T  
HAVE THE  
ABILITY TO  
PERSUADE  
AND LEAD  
MY PEERS.





BUT I  
LOOKED IT  
OVER! NO  
MATCHES!

HUH?!



ONTO  
THE  
NEXT  
ONE!

HYRON  
REFERENCE  
BOOK ONE,  
FINISHED!

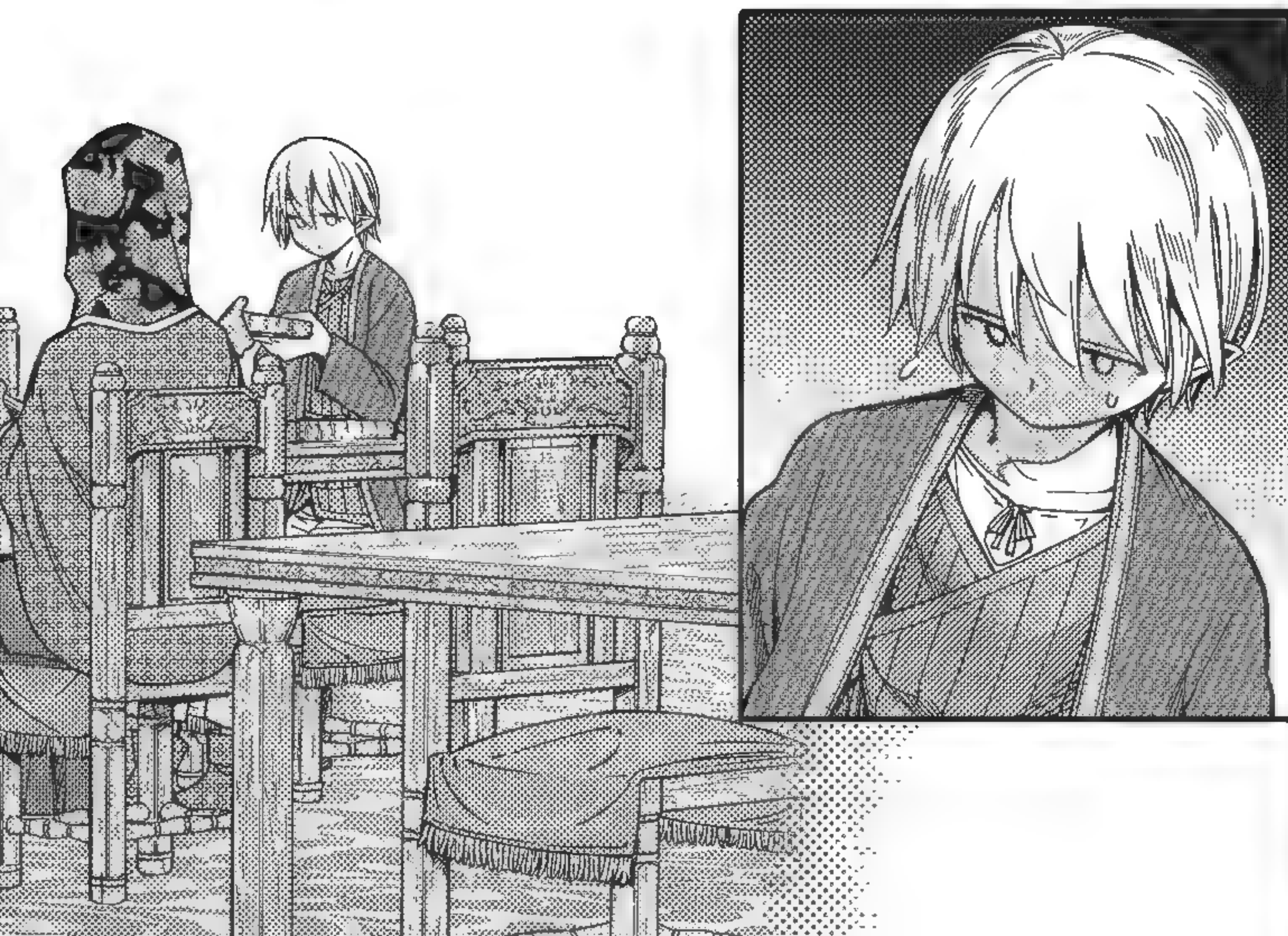
PASS IT  
THIS WAY.  
I'LL DOUBLE-  
CHECK WHEN  
I'M DONE  
WITH MINE.



THERE'S  
NO POSSI-  
BILITY...

...YOU  
COULD HAVE  
MISSED IT IN  
THERE?

ARE YOU  
CERTAIN?







IT'S LIKE  
I'M NOT  
CONTRIBUTING  
ANYTHING AT  
ALL.



WE'RE  
GOING TO  
FAIL.

"WE'RE  
GOING TO  
FAIL BASED  
ON TIME."

OF  
COURSE  
I'M NOT  
GONNA  
MAKE IT.

DOES  
IT EVEN  
MATTER?  
WHY EVEN  
TRY?

I ALREADY  
DID SO  
POORLY  
ON THE  
FIRST TWO  
STAGES.



MY WHOLE  
TALE WAS  
DOOMED  
FROM THE  
START.

THERE WAS  
NO WAY  
I'D EVER  
BECOME A  
KAFNA.







I WANNA  
GO HOME.



...AND THEN  
I'LL JUST  
SAY IT.

OF COURSE  
I WAS NEVER  
GONNA BE A  
KAFNA!

I'M  
READY  
TO LET  
GO.



...THE  
PEOPLE  
I MET  
ALONG  
THE  
WAY...

...HOW  
VAST THE  
CENTRAL  
LIBRARY  
WAS...

I WANNA SIT  
NEXT TO MY  
SISTER. I'LL  
TELL HER  
ABOUT MY  
TRAVELS...

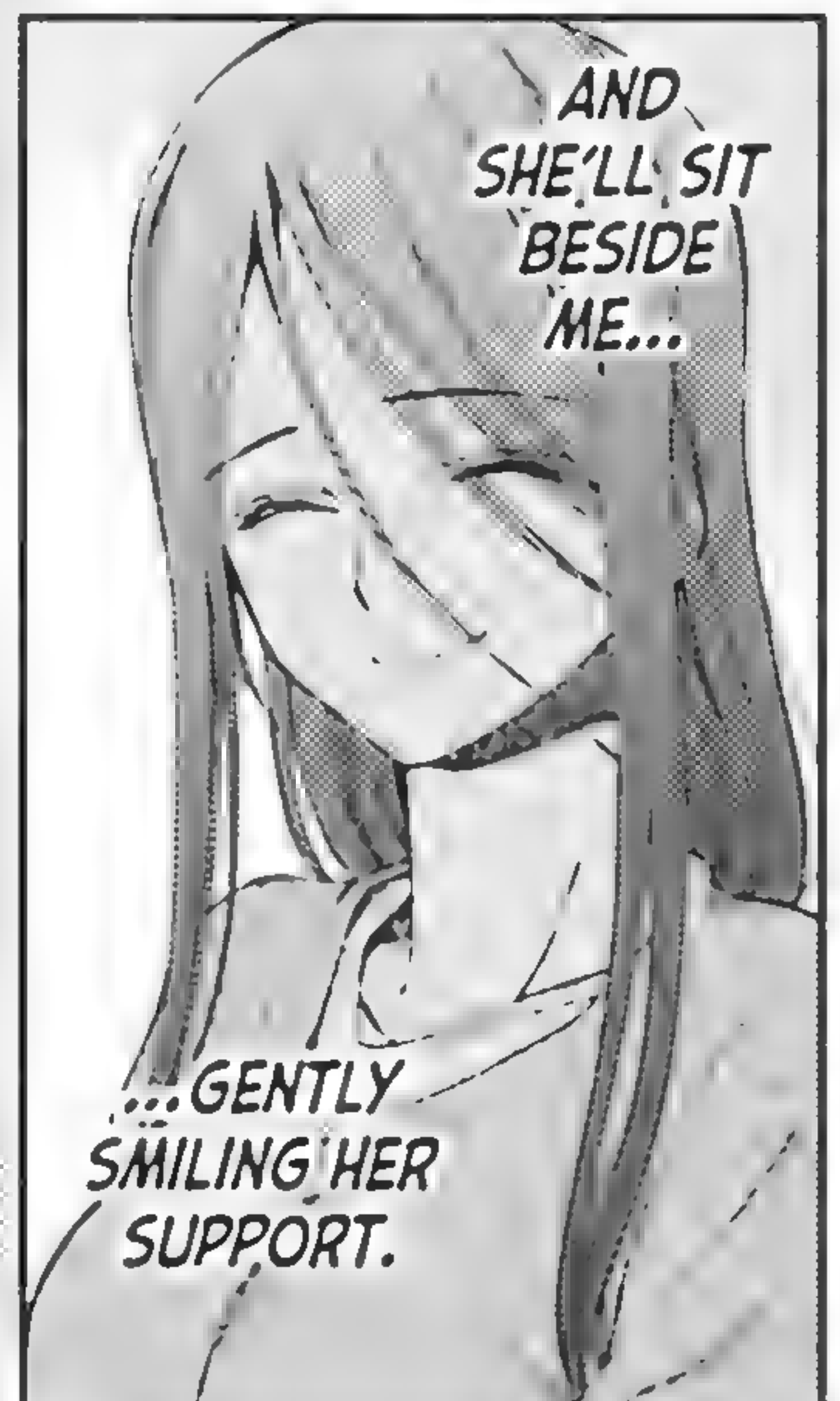


YES.  
THAT'S  
IT.

THAT  
WILL BE  
ENOUGH  
FOR ME.

THEO.

DO NOT  
TRIVIALIZE  
YOURSELF.



AND  
SHE'LL SIT  
BESIDE  
ME...

...GENTLY  
SMILING HER  
SUPPORT.





THERE IS  
SOMETHING  
ONLY  
YOU ARE  
CAPABLE  
OF.

YOU JUST  
HAVE TO  
FIND IT.







HOW  
COULD  
I LET  
MYSELF  
THINK LIKE  
THAT?!

CLENCH

"OF  
COURSE  
I'M NOT  
GONNA  
MAKE  
IT"?!



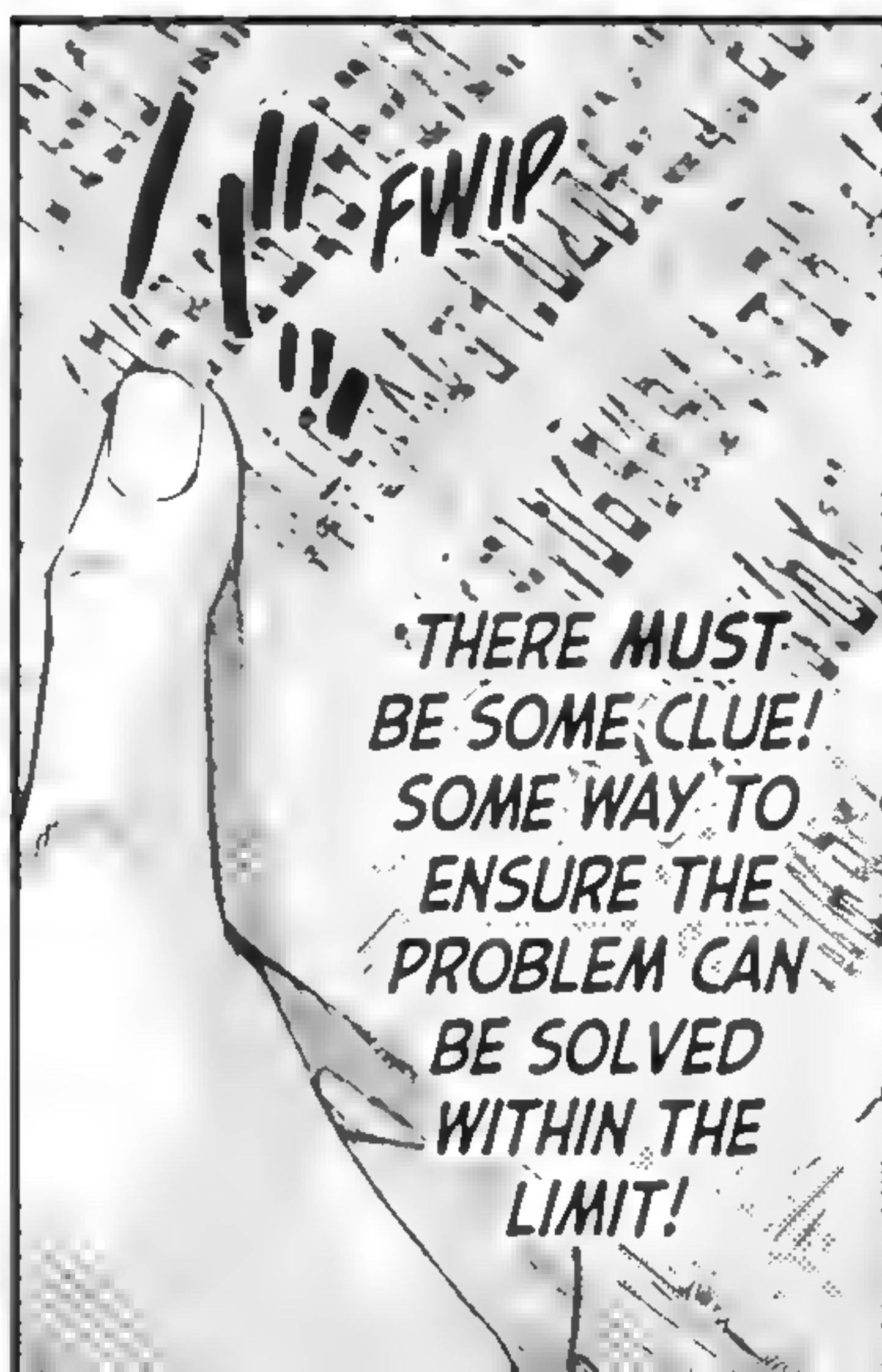
GIVING  
UP  
NOW...

...IS LIKE  
SPITTING IN  
THE FACE OF  
EVERYONE  
WHO CHEERED  
ME ON.



IT PAYS TO  
GO HUNTING  
BEFORE  
YOU START  
CRYING AND  
BEGGING.

THERE'S  
ALWAYS A  
SOLUTION  
HIDING  
NEARBY.



THERE MUST  
BE SOME CLUE!  
SOME WAY TO  
ENSURE THE  
PROBLEM CAN  
BE SOLVED  
WITHIN THE  
LIMIT!



HUNT! I  
HAVE TO  
HUNT!








SOMETHING!




THERE  
HAS TO BE  
SOMETHING!



SEARCH, THEO!  
SOMETHING YOU FAILED  
TO NOTICE BEFORE!




?!  

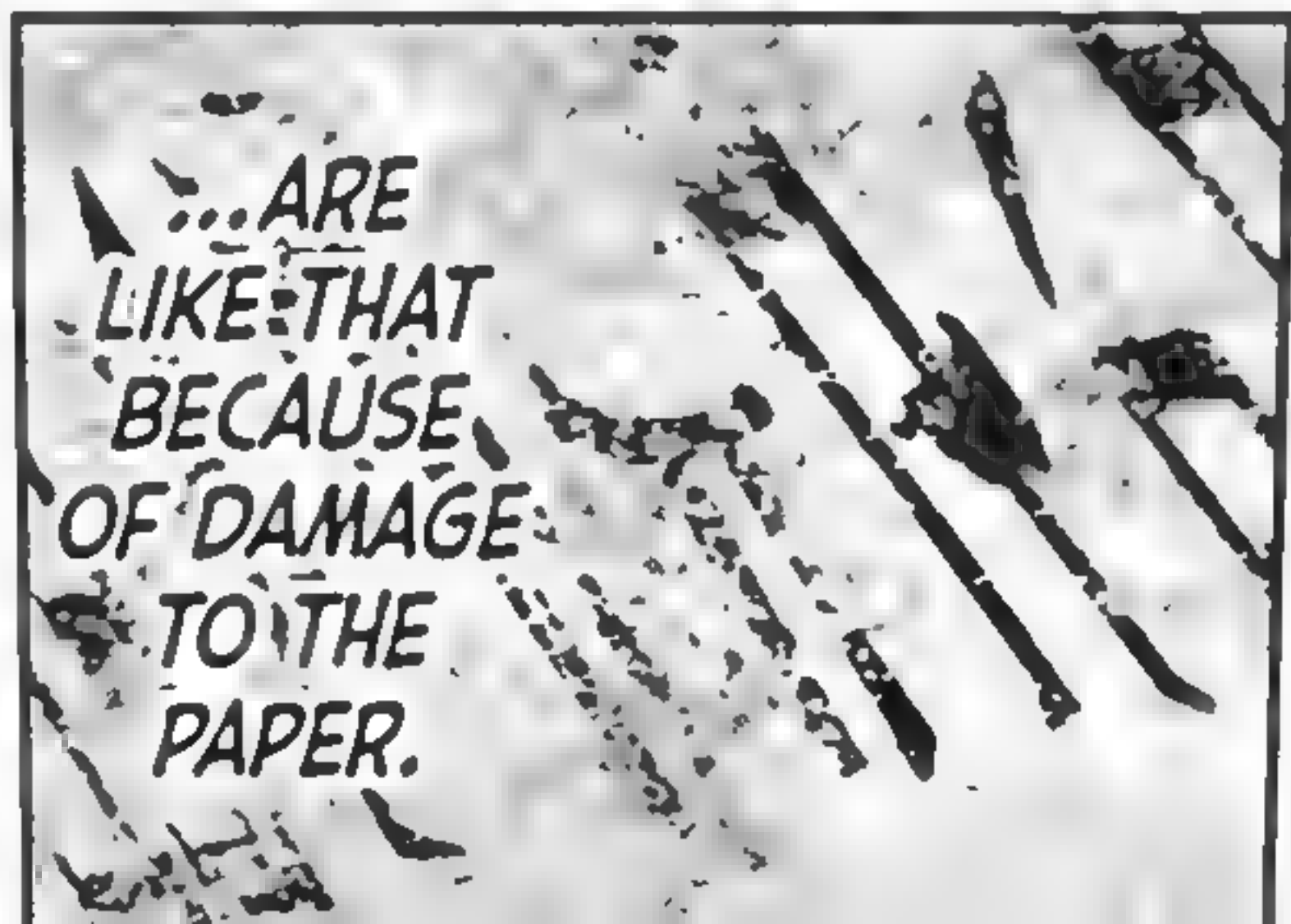
WHY IS  
THIS  
LINE...?




BUT IN  
THIS ONE  
SPOT, IT'S  
AS IF INK  
NEVER  
MADE IT  
ONTO THE  
PAGE IN  
THE FIRST  
PLACE.



ALL THE  
OTHER  
SMEARED  
AND FADED  
LETTERS...



...ARE  
LIKE THAT  
BECAUSE  
OF DAMAGE  
TO THE  
PAPER.



THE LETTERS  
HERE. THERE'S  
A CLEAN BREAK  
STRAIGHT  
THROUGH!

BUT  
THERE'S NO  
DAMAGE TO  
THE PAGE.






OF  
COURSE!

THIS *ISN'T*  
HAND-  
WRITTEN!

IT'S  
PRINTED.  
WITH A  
WOOD-  
BLOCK!



WHAT  
WAS  
THAT?!



PART OF THE  
WOODBLOCK  
MUST HAVE  
BEEN GOUGED  
SOMEHOW, AND  
IT COULDN'T  
CARRY INK TO  
THE PAGE!


ONLY THE  
RAKTA AND  
KADOE HAVE  
A HISTORY  
OF RELIEF  
PRINTING!

BUT...  
BUT  
WHAT  
IF...

AND  
GIVEN  
THAT  
KADOE IS  
WRITTEN  
VERTI-  
CALLY...

*The use of  
carved wooden  
boards with  
raised letters  
to apply ink  
to paper. A  
predecessor of  
movable type.*

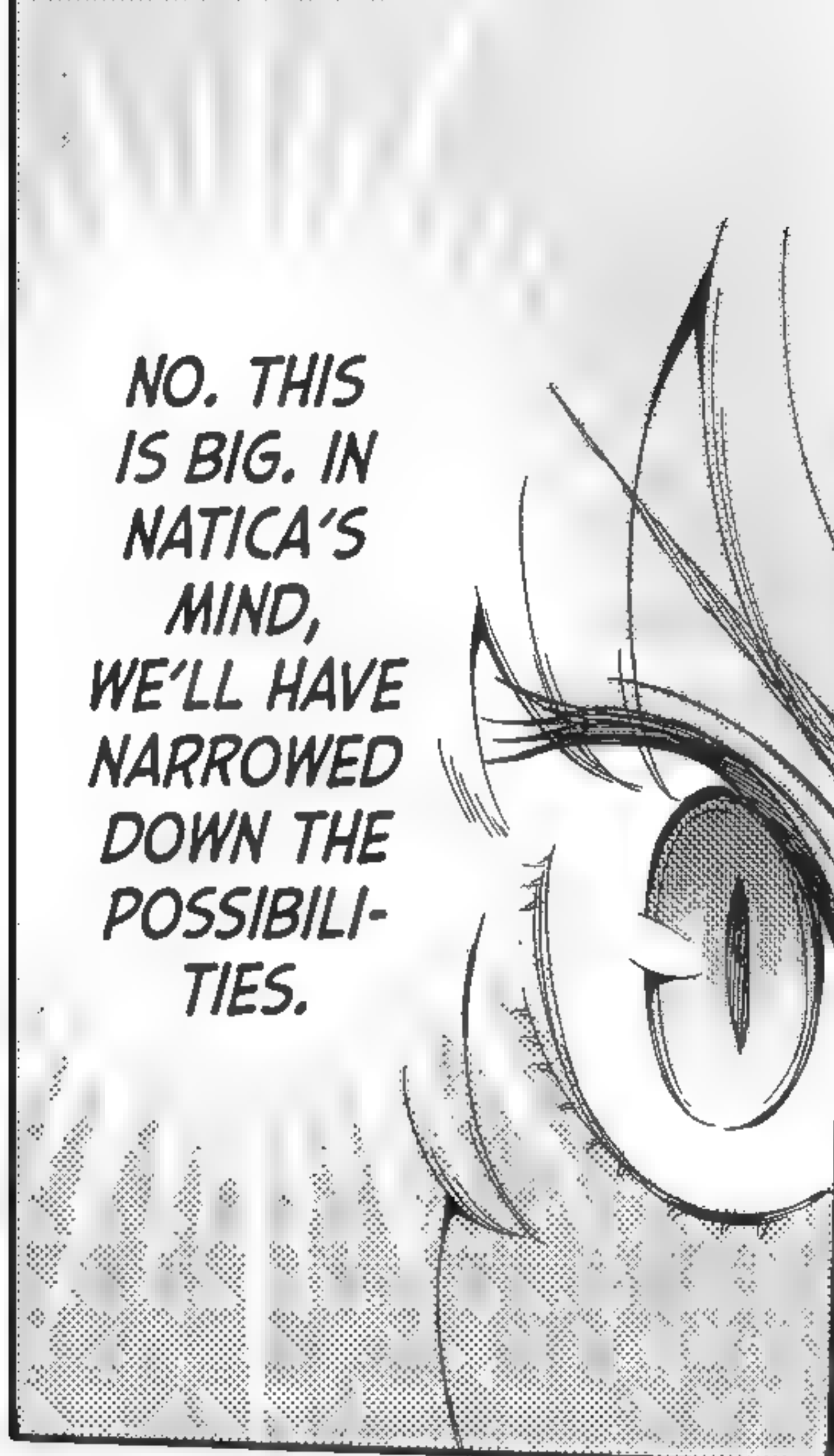
RELIEF  
PRINT-  
ING



LOOK! THE  
WRITING'S  
IRREGULAR,  
SO WE  
ASSUMED IT  
HAD TO BE  
BY HAND...

...BUT THIS  
BIT OF  
MISSING  
INK SAYS  
OTHERWISE!





NO. THIS IS BIG. IN NATICA'S MIND, WE'LL HAVE NARROWED DOWN THE POSSIBILITIES.



NOT THAT WE'RE OUT OF THE WOODS YET...

GEE, THANKS...

NARROWED THE SEARCH TO RAKTA TYPEFACES AND ROULETTES!

WAY TO GO, THEO!



RIGHT, THEN.

LET'S PRIORITIZE RAKTA!



NATICA, I CAN'T SAY DECISIVELY THAT IT'S A WOOD-BLOCK...

...BUT IS IT ALL RIGHT IF WE PROCEED ASSUMING IT'S RAKTA?



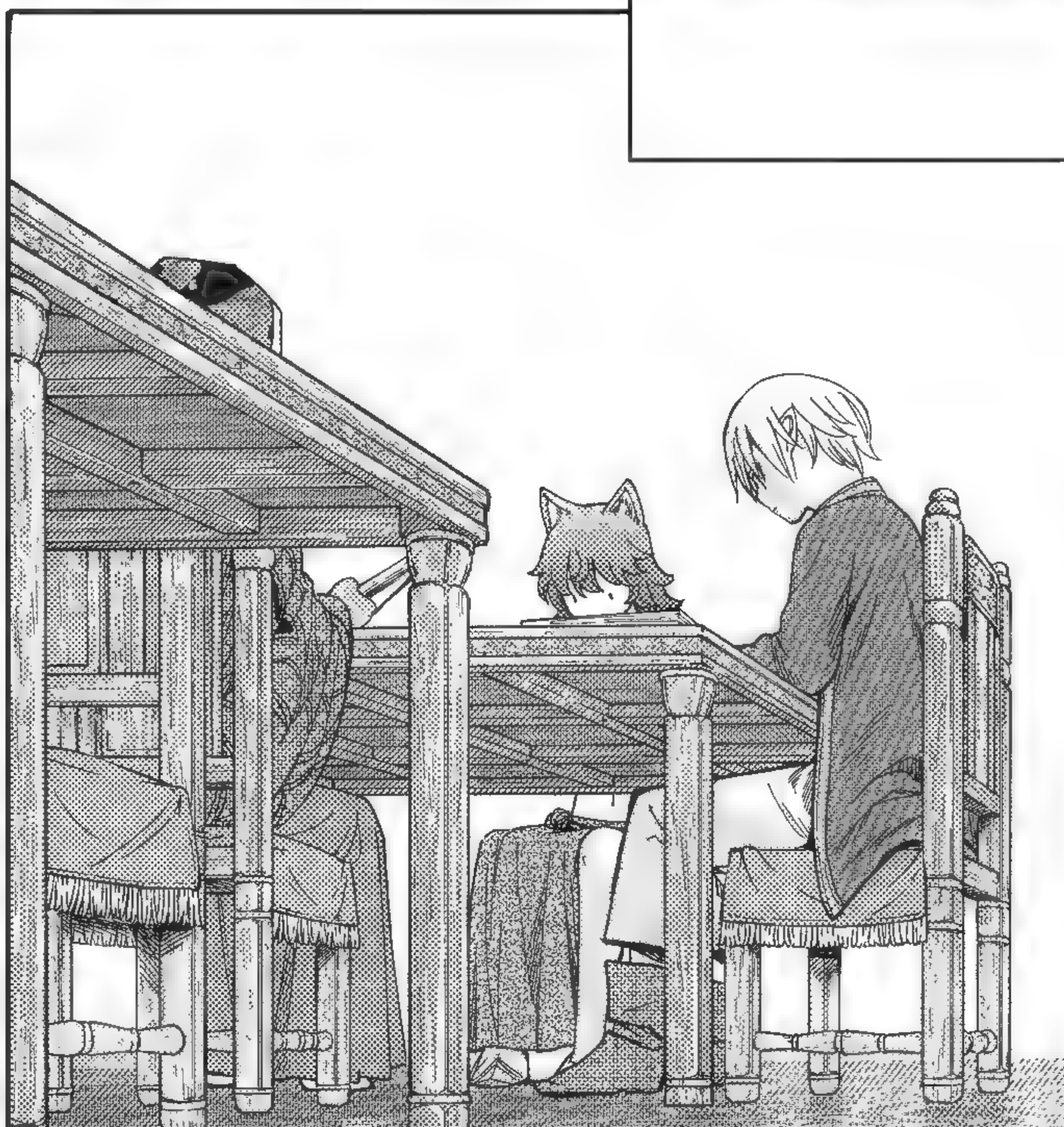
IT'S STILL A RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK.

THE ONLY PROBLEM IS, AS THE CULTURE THAT INVENTED BOOKS, RAKTA HAS A HUGE ARRAY OF TYPEFACES.

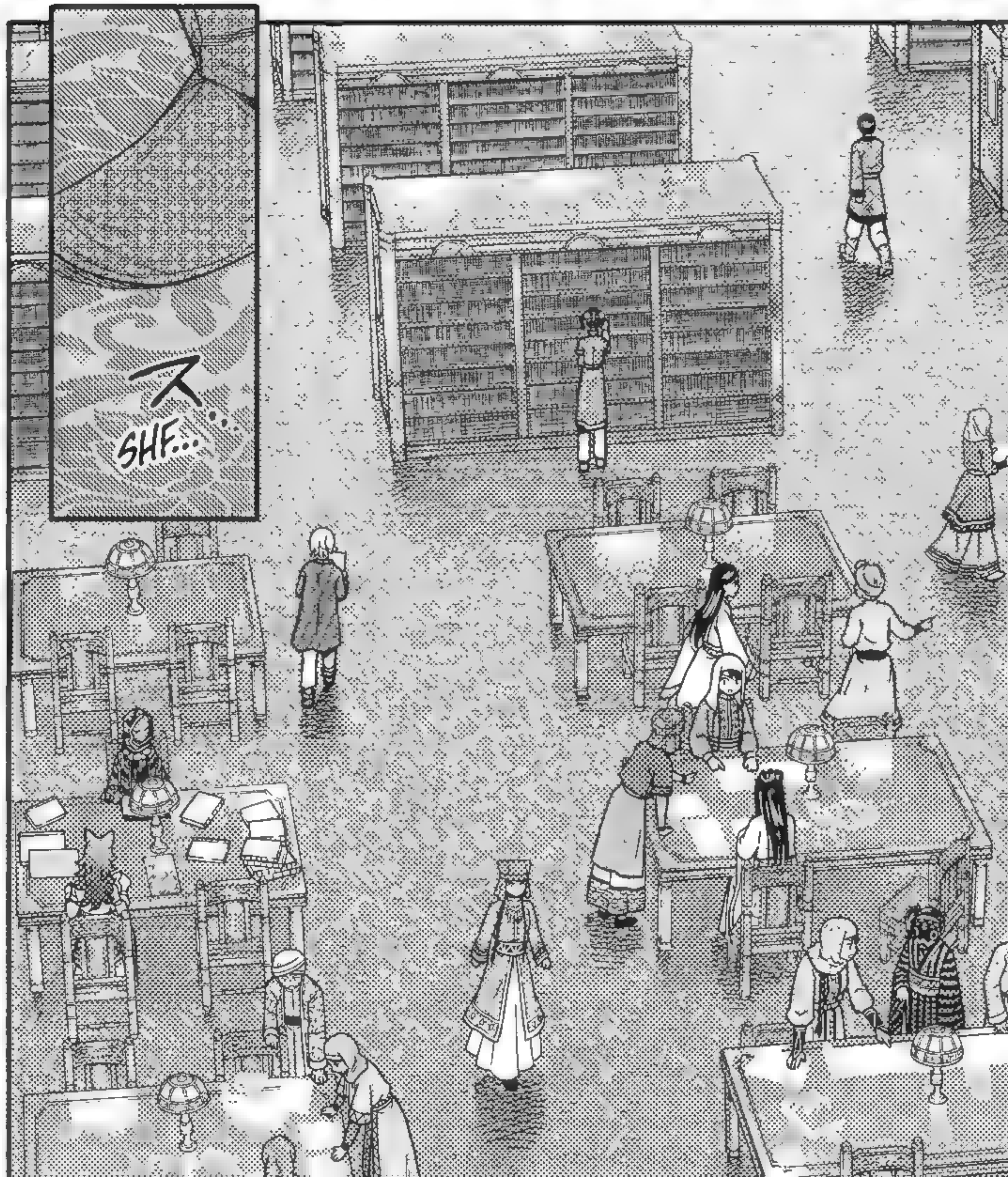
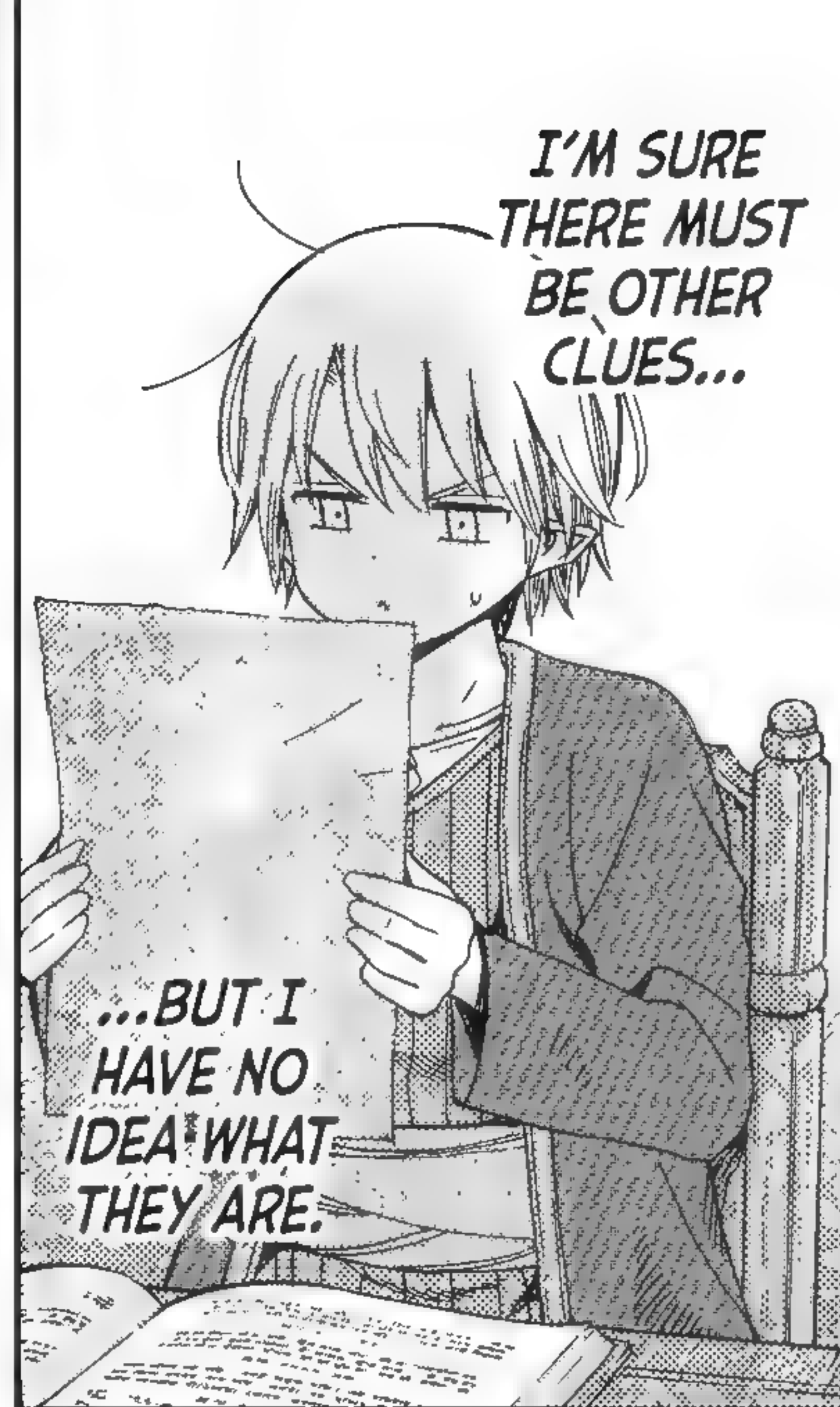
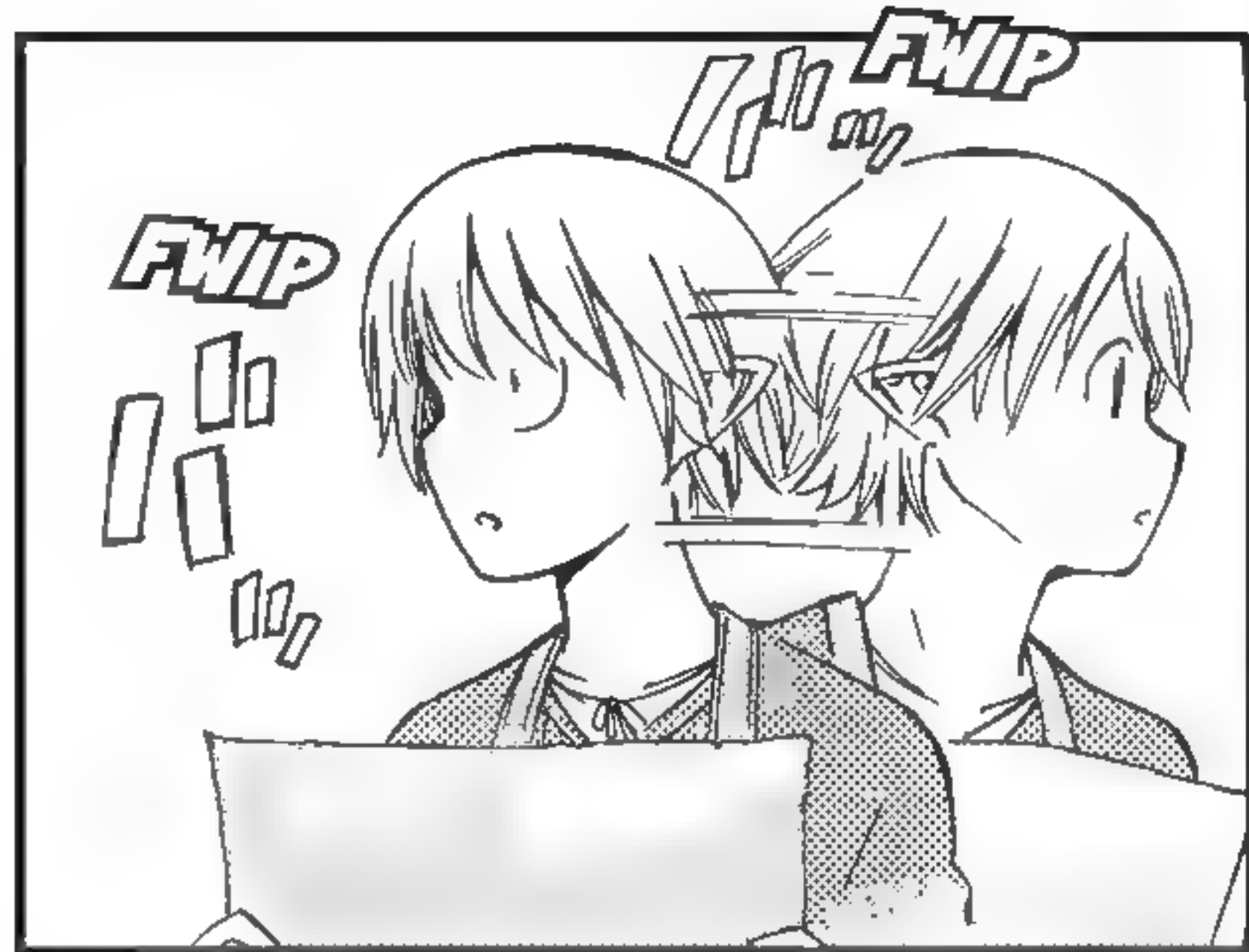


FLICK ...

WE STILL NEED ANOTHER BREAK-THROUGH.







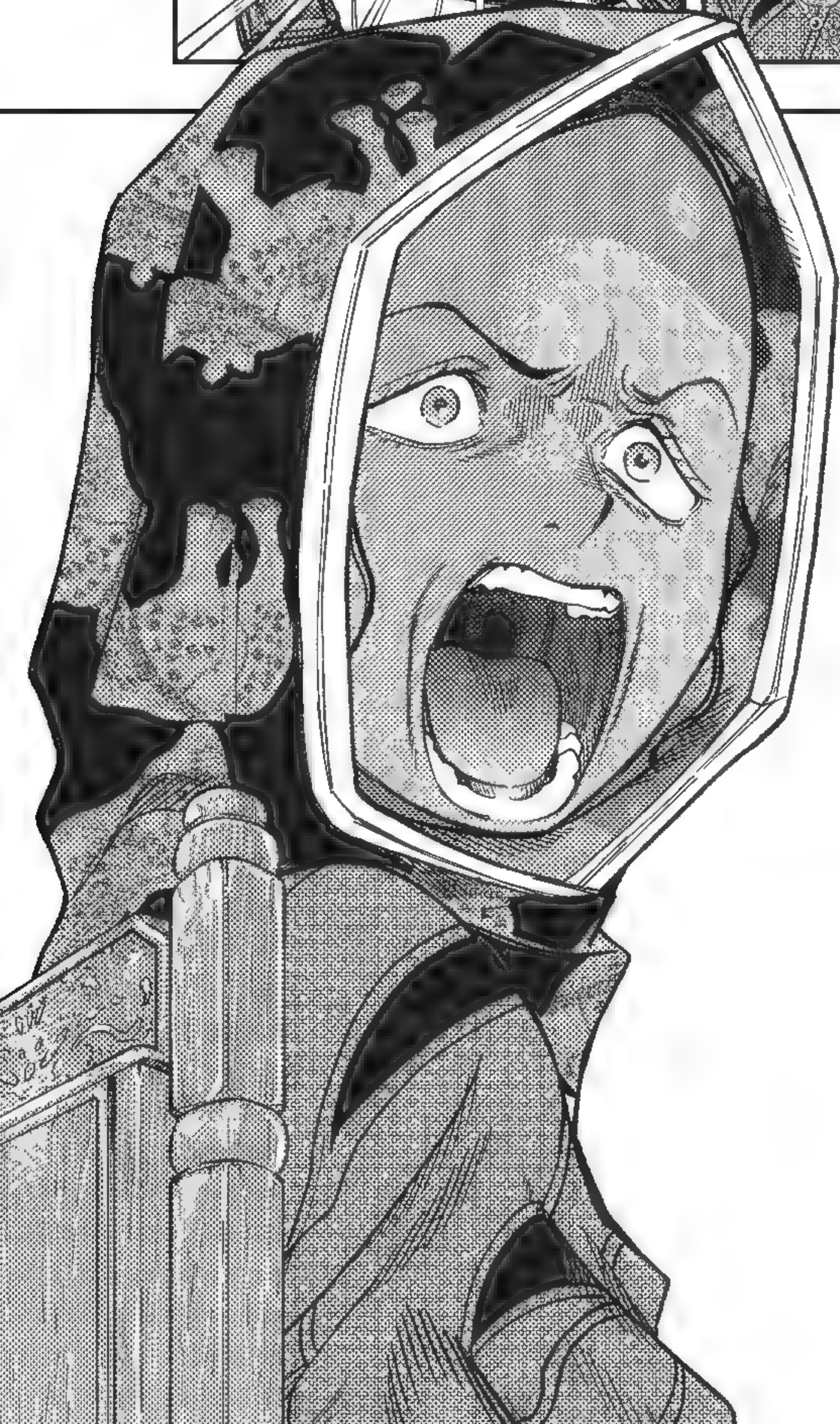




















I'D NEVER EXPERIENCED ANYTHING LIKE IT. IS THIS WHAT IT MEANS TO SENSE SOMEONE'S MANA?

FOR JUST A MOMENT, I THOUGHT I SAW A BEAUTIFUL OUTLINE OF LIGHT, TRACING HER FIGURE.



BUT THE BLOND-HAIRED KID LET US HAVE ONE OF HIS!



WE COULDN'T GET ONE AT FIRST. THERE WEREN'T MANY COPIES.

WE BROUGHT THE COLLEGIATE!



I JUST HAVE A FEELING THERE'S SOMETHING AMAZING ABOUT HER.



OH! WOW! THANK YOU SO MUCH!



THIS IS HUKMA CALLIGRAPHY. IT WAS IN USE IN THE CYCLE OF 30 ANTECEDENT ON THE IRIDAL ISLE.



ARE  
YOU  
OUT  
OF  
YOUR  
MIND  
?!

MAKIN' PROGRESS,  
Y'KNOW?!

HEY,  
NATICA!  
WE GOT  
THE NAME  
OF THE  
TYPEFACE!



THEY NEVER  
SPECIFIED THAT  
WE COULDN'T  
TALK TO OTHER  
GROUPS.



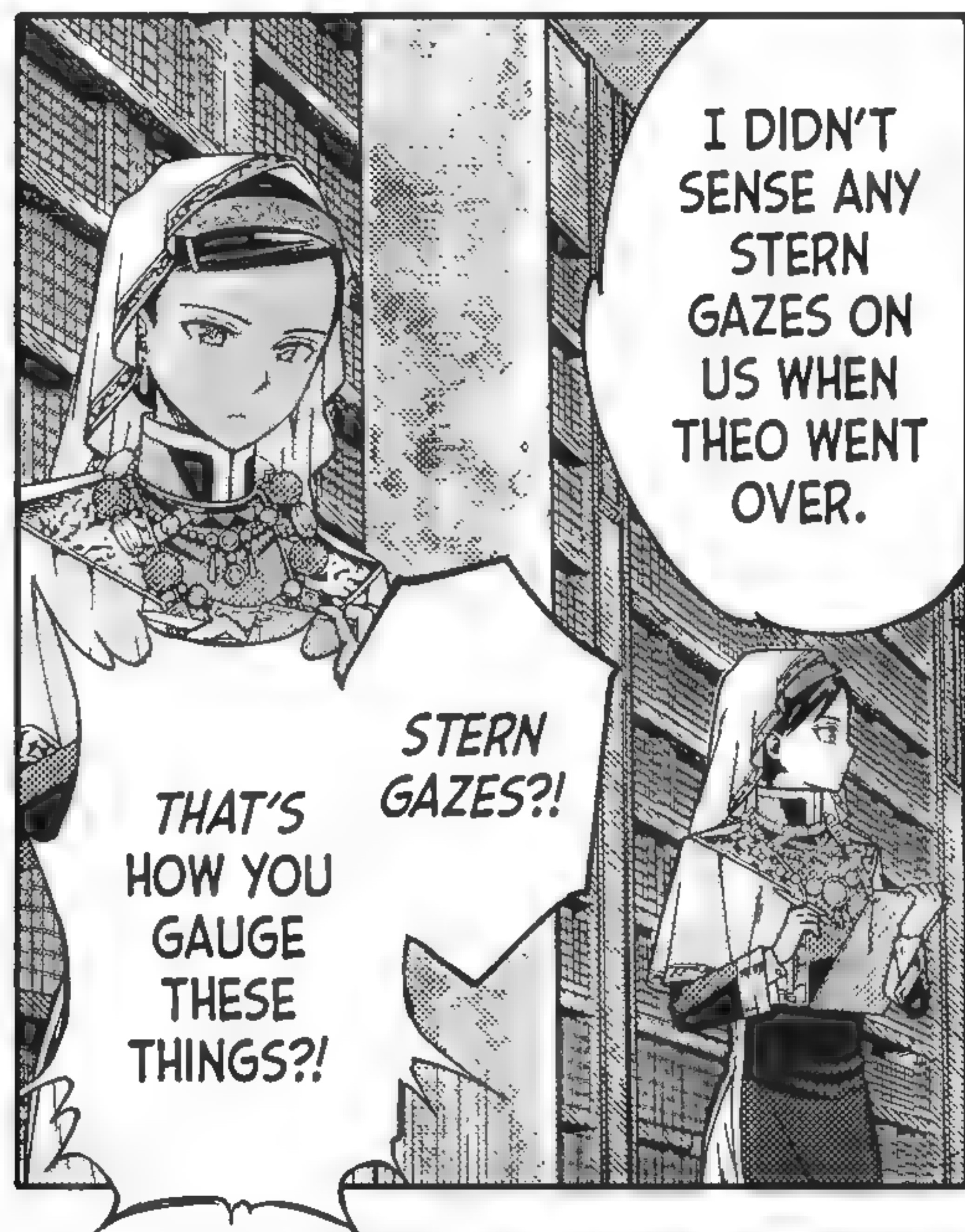
NOW  
YOU'RE  
BREAKING  
RULES!

WHAT  
POSSESSED  
YOU TO DO  
THAT?!

YOU  
ASKED  
ANOTHER  
GROUP?!

BUT,  
UM...









30...

30...

AND THE  
RAKTA GIRL  
WASN'T LYING,  
Y'KNOW?

NO ONE'S  
GONNA GET  
ANGRY AT  
US FOR  
COOPERATING  
WITH OTHER  
GROUPS.

FIRST,  
JUST LET  
ME SAY  
THIS.



I'M REAL  
GOOD AT  
TELLING  
WHERE  
PEOPLE ARE  
LOOKING.

WHEN  
SOMEONE HAS  
THEIR EYES ON  
ME, I KNOW  
RIGHT AWAY.

TRUST ME.  
I CAN TELL,  
Y'KNOW?



THEY COULD  
BE WAITING  
TO INFORM  
US THAT  
WE'VE BEEN  
PENALIZED.

HOW  
DO YOU  
KNOW  
FOR  
SURE?!

AND IF SOME  
NITWIT FROM  
ANOTHER  
GROUP CAME  
TO ME, I SURE  
WOULDN'T  
GIVE AWAY THE  
ANSWER!



BUT THERE  
WASN'T ANY  
OF THAT  
THIS TIME.


TAKE EARLIER,  
WHEN YOU WERE  
ABOUT TO  
START RUNNING  
THROUGH THE  
LIBRARY. I COULD  
FEEL A KAFNA'S  
STERN EYES ON  
US, LIKE SHE WAS  
GONNA DEDUCT  
POINTS.



...??

WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN?





IT'S NOT  
A *RELIABLE*  
SOURCE OF  
INFORMA-  
TION.

I'LL BUY  
THAT. BUT  
YOU CAN'T  
GLEAN  
ANYTHING  
FROM IT.

SURE.  
I'VE FELT  
PEOPLE  
WATCHING  
ME BEFORE.

YOU  
HAVE...

...GOT  
TO BE  
KIDDING  
ME.

WH-?!

I WAS LINED  
UP AT THE  
VERY BACK!  
THERE'S NO  
WAY SHE  
COULD HAVE  
SEEN ME!

THE TYPE  
OF GAZE  
THAT COULD  
PENETRATE  
STONE.  
CLASSIC  
NATICA.

YOU WERE  
TRYING TO  
FIGURE OUT  
WHO WAS  
FEELING  
ANXIOUS  
ABOUT  
THE TEST.

NO?  
LEMME SEE...  
REMEMBER  
WHEN WE  
WERE WALK-  
ING OUTSIDE?  
YOU WERE  
GLANCING  
AROUND THE  
WHOLE TIME,  
MISS SHIFTY  
EYES.

LIES ARE  
ESPECIALLY  
EASY TO  
DETECT.

IF YOU LEARN  
TO WATCH  
PEOPLE'S EYES,  
YOU FIND OUT  
A LOT ABOUT  
WHAT THEY'RE  
THINKING.

THAT'S  
WHY I  
CAME  
OVER TO  
TALK!

THEO'S GAZE,  
ON THE OTHER  
HAND, WAS  
FULL OF  
CURIOSITY!


ANYWAY, YOU  
SURE MADE  
THE RIGHT  
CHOICE WITH  
THAT RAKTA  
CUTIE, THEO!

IF SO,  
I GUESS  
THERE  
COULD BE  
PEOPLE  
OUT THERE  
ABLE TO  
SENSE IT.

IF MANA IS  
PRESENT IN  
EVERYTHING,  
DOES THAT  
MEAN IT'S  
THERE IN EACH  
PERSON'S  
GAZE, TOO?

GULP  
...






I'D SAY  
SHE'S THE  
MOST  
CAPABLE  
EXAMINEE  
HERE,  
Y'KNOW?

SHE'S A  
MONUMENT TO  
CONFIDENCE.  
TO HER, THE  
KAFNA EXAM IS  
JUST A MINOR  
WAYPOINT ON  
THE ROAD  
AHEAD.

THERE  
ISN'T THE  
SLIGHTEST  
TRACE OF  
UNCERTAINTY  
IN THOSE  
EYES.



I'M  
SUPPOSED TO  
BE THE BEST  
ONE HERE!

WHAT  
DID  
YOU  
SAY?!



AND  
HERE'S THE  
ROULETTE!

A PATTERN  
CALLED  
AGGESA,  
DATING  
FROM THE  
CYCLE OF  
210!



NO  
DOUBT  
ABOUT  
IT!

THE BOOK IS  
DEFINITELY  
WRITTEN IN  
HUKMA CAL-  
LIGRAPHY.

CLATTER



I  
FOUND  
IT!





ALL WE HAVE  
TO DO NOW  
IS CONVERT  
THE SCRIPT  
INTO MODERN  
RAKTA!

...!!



WHO  
IS  
THAT  
GIRL?!

SHE REALLY  
KNEW?! AT A  
GLANCE?! THERE  
ARE WAY TOO  
MANY TYPEFACES  
OUT THERE, EVEN  
FOR A NATIVE  
SPEAKER!



IF YOU'D  
LISTENED,  
WE WOULD  
HAVE  
MADE IT!

THIS IS ALL  
BECAUSE YOU  
TWO WOULDN'T  
FOLLOW MY  
DIRECTIONS!

?!

I TOLD  
YOU THIS  
WOULD  
HAPPEN!





I'M STARTING  
THE CONVER-  
SION!

CAN  
EITHER OF  
YOU READ  
RAKTA?!

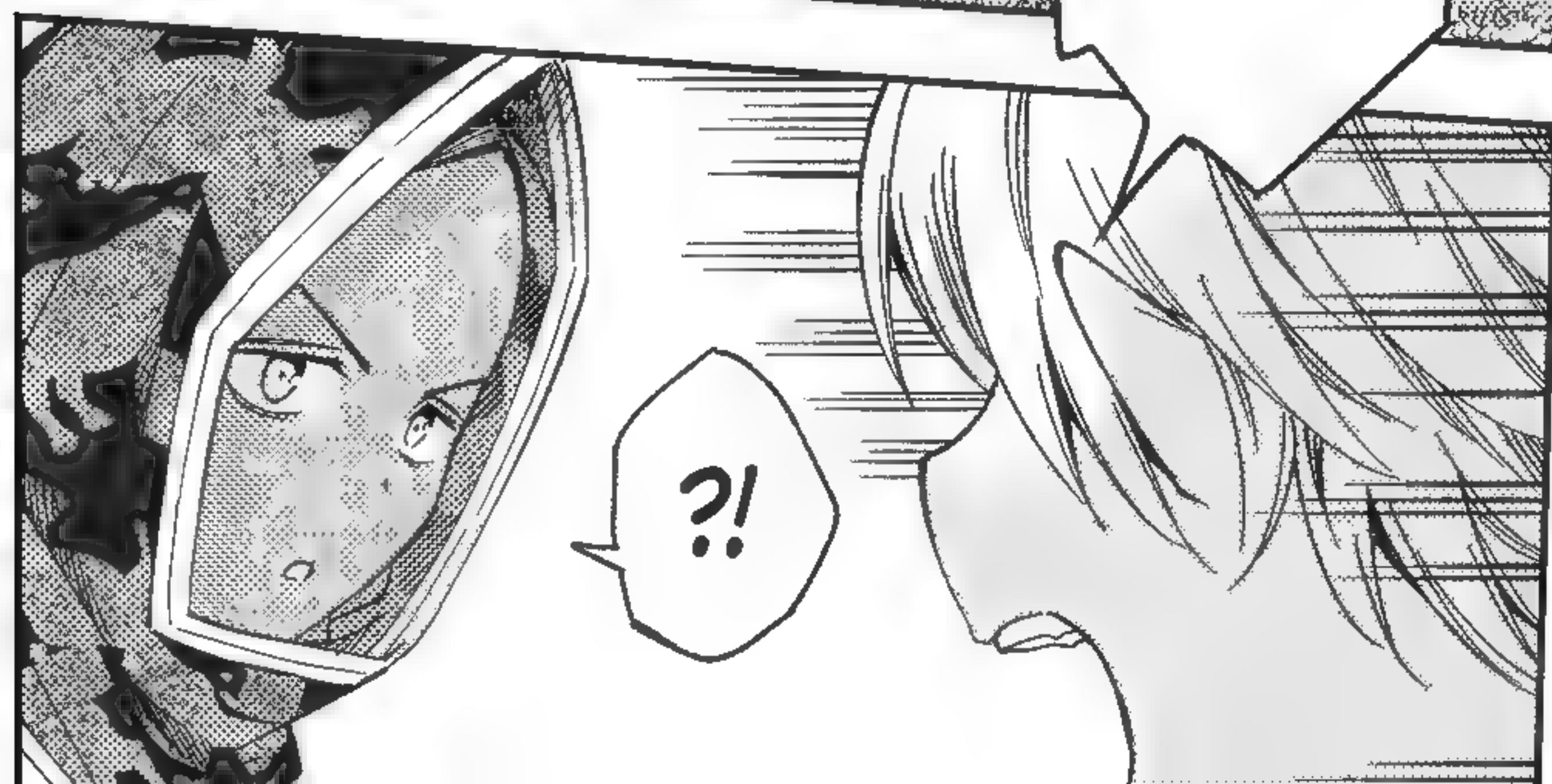
JUST THE  
BASICS!

TIME  
LIMITS  
MIGHT  
VARY BY  
TASK,  
BUT I  
DOUBT  
THEY  
VARY BY  
MUCH!



I'LL START  
WITH THE  
LEFT HALF.  
YOU TWO  
WORK ON  
THE-

WAIT!




?!

THEY  
RAN  
OUT OF  
TIME!



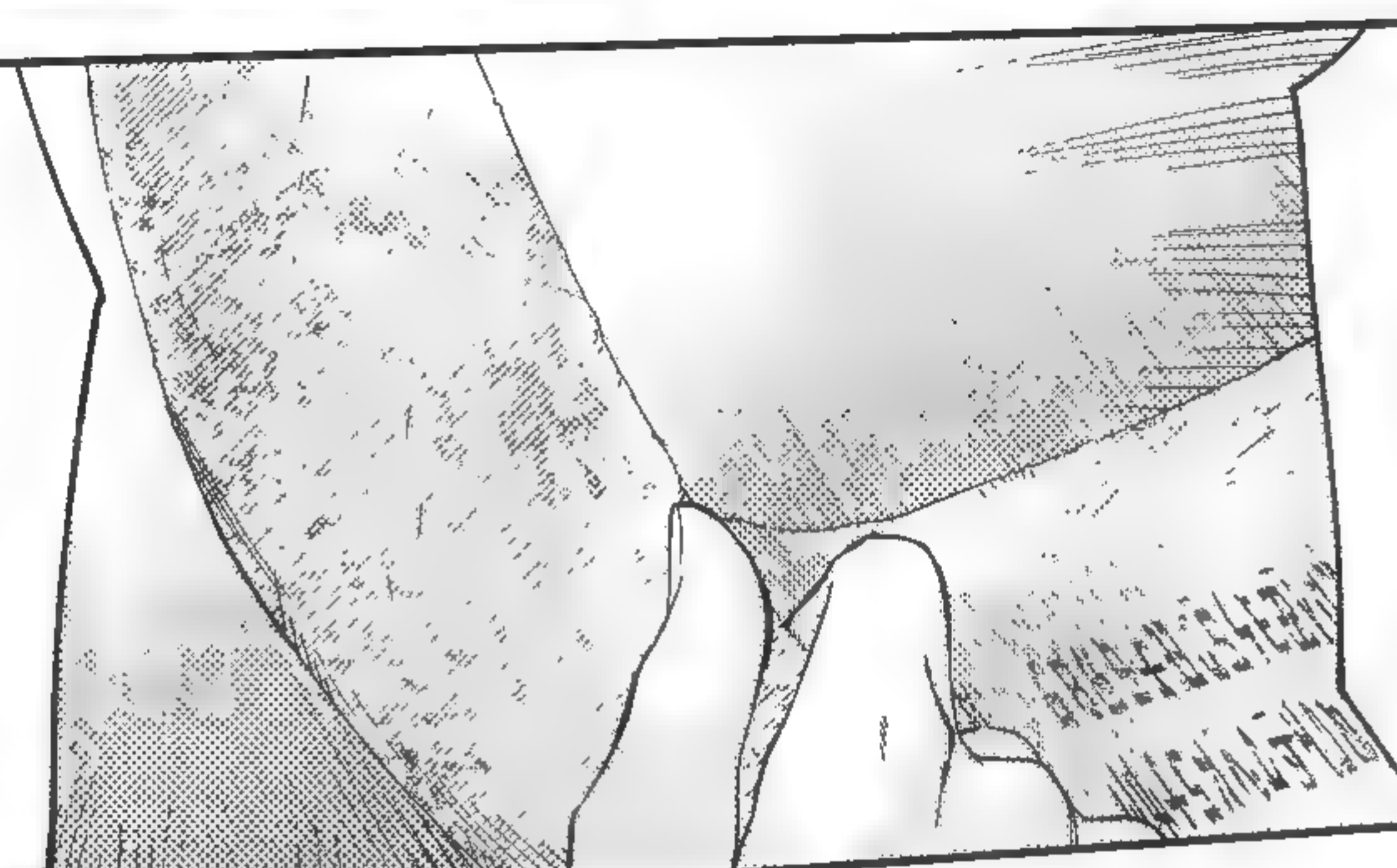




IT'S A  
WELL-  
KNOWN  
BOOK. IT  
HAS TO  
BE!

THE  
TEST...

...IS  
DESIGNED  
WITH  
A TIME  
LIMIT.




IF IT IS, WE  
ONLY NEED TO  
TRANSLATE  
THE FIRST FEW  
WORDS TO  
KNOW WHAT  
BOOK IT IS!

AND IF ONLY ONE  
SIDE OF THE PAGE  
IS PRINTED, IT'S  
PROBABLY THE  
*FIRST* PAGE OF  
THE STORY!



BUT...



I DON'T  
KNOW  
IF I CAN  
RECOGNIZE  
IT, EVEN IF  
IT IS WELL  
KNOWN!



BUT IT'S  
COMMON  
FOR WOOD-  
BLOCK  
PRINTING  
TO USE  
ONLY ONE  
SIDE!

...NATICA  
WOULD  
BE ABLE  
TO!



ME,  
EITHER!



IF I'M WRONG,  
WE KEEP  
TRANSLATING.  
WE DON'T HAVE  
ANYTHING TO  
LOSE.





LOOK FOR  
NOUNS!

FINE.  
LET'S DO  
THIS.

HMPH.  
COMES  
DOWN  
TO ME IN  
THE END,  
HUH?

I'LL  
LOOK UP  
THESE  
ONES.

LEAD  
THE WAY,  
NATICA!

THIS STRING  
APPEARS  
OFTEN.  
MUST  
BE THE  
PREDICATE.

I BELIEVE  
IN YOU  
BOTH!



I HAVEN'T  
GOT A CLUE!



THIS ONE  
MEANS  
"SOLDIER"!

AND...  
...AND  
"STORE." A  
DRAPER'S?

I THINK  
THIS  
ONE'S  
"CLOTH."



THAT'S HOW  
LEGEND  
OF THE  
IMMORTAL  
WARRIOR  
STARTS!  
BY TOSHI  
NEZUCHA!

A BOOK THAT  
BEGINS WITH  
A DRAPER...  
RECOUNTING AN  
OLD TALE TO A  
SOLDIER...

AND THE DATE IT  
WAS WRITTEN WOULD  
CORRESPOND TO THE  
ERA OF WOODBLOCK  
PRINTS!

WE  
DON'T  
HAVE...

TELL  
US!

DID YOU  
FIGURE  
IT OUT?!

...TIME!!

EEP!

LET'S  
DO ONE  
MORE  
LINE!  
JUST  
TO BE  
SURE!

W-WAIT  
JUST A  
MOMENT!



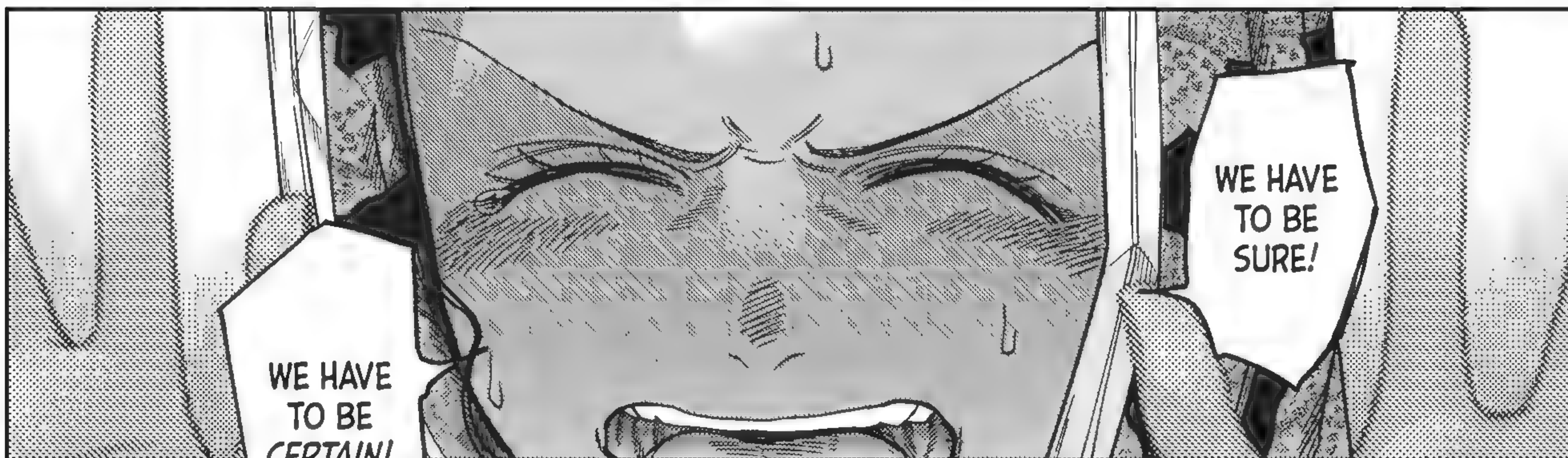


THERE  
ISN'T  
TIME  
FOR  
THAT!

AND IT  
MIGHT  
NOT BE  
THE FIRST  
PAGE,  
AND...

BUT  
THERE ARE  
SO MANY  
SOLDIERS  
AND DRAP-  
ERS...

PLEASE,  
NATICA!



WE HAVE  
TO BE  
CERTAIN!

WE HAVE  
TO BE  
SURE!

DO NOT  
WORRY,  
FATHER.



LISTEN TO  
ME, MY  
DEAR.

THERE  
ARE  
TIMES...

...WHEN WE  
MUST BE  
DECISIVE.  
WHEN WE  
MUST HAVE  
FAITH AND  
TAKE THE  
PLUNGE  
FROM ON  
HIGH.



MY DEAR  
NATICA...

YOU ARE SO  
TALENTED...

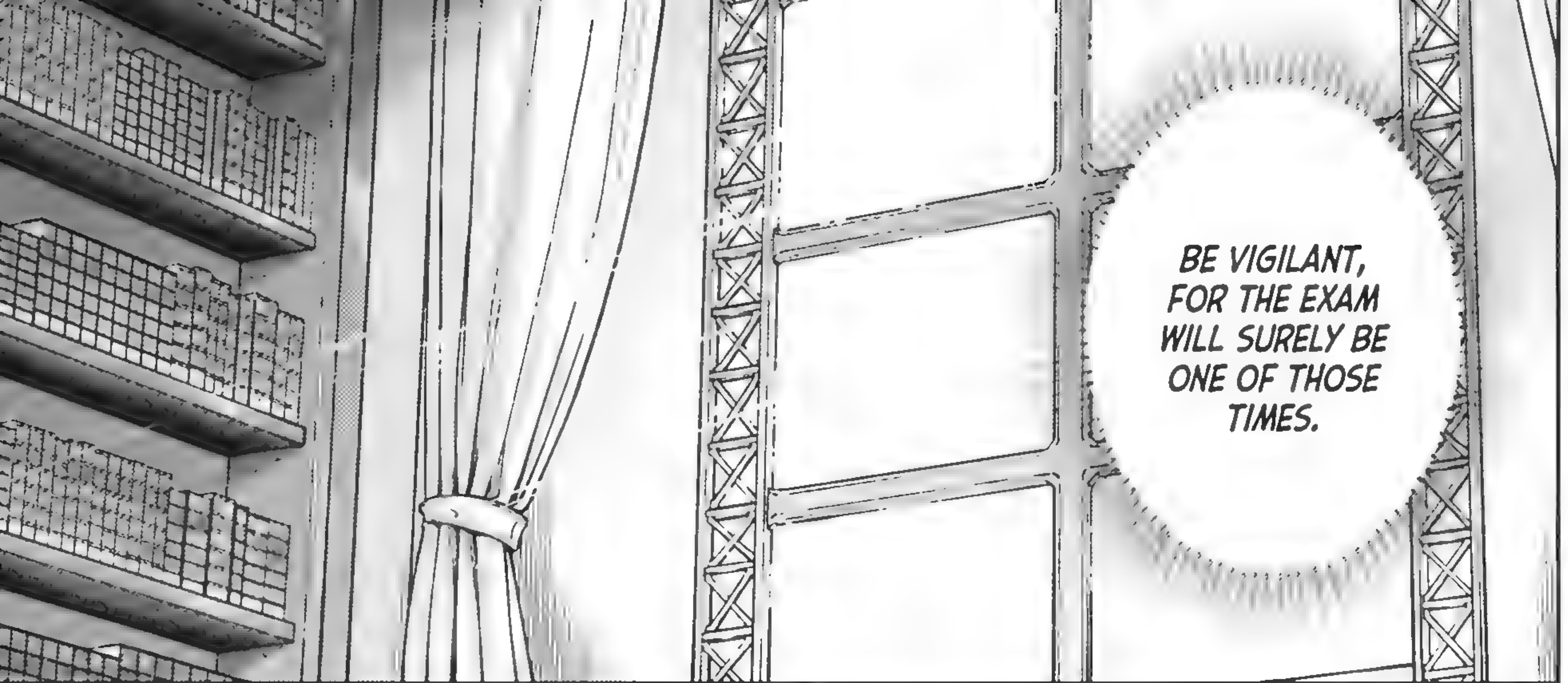
...BUT  
YOUR  
CAUTION  
WEIGHS  
YOU  
DOWN.



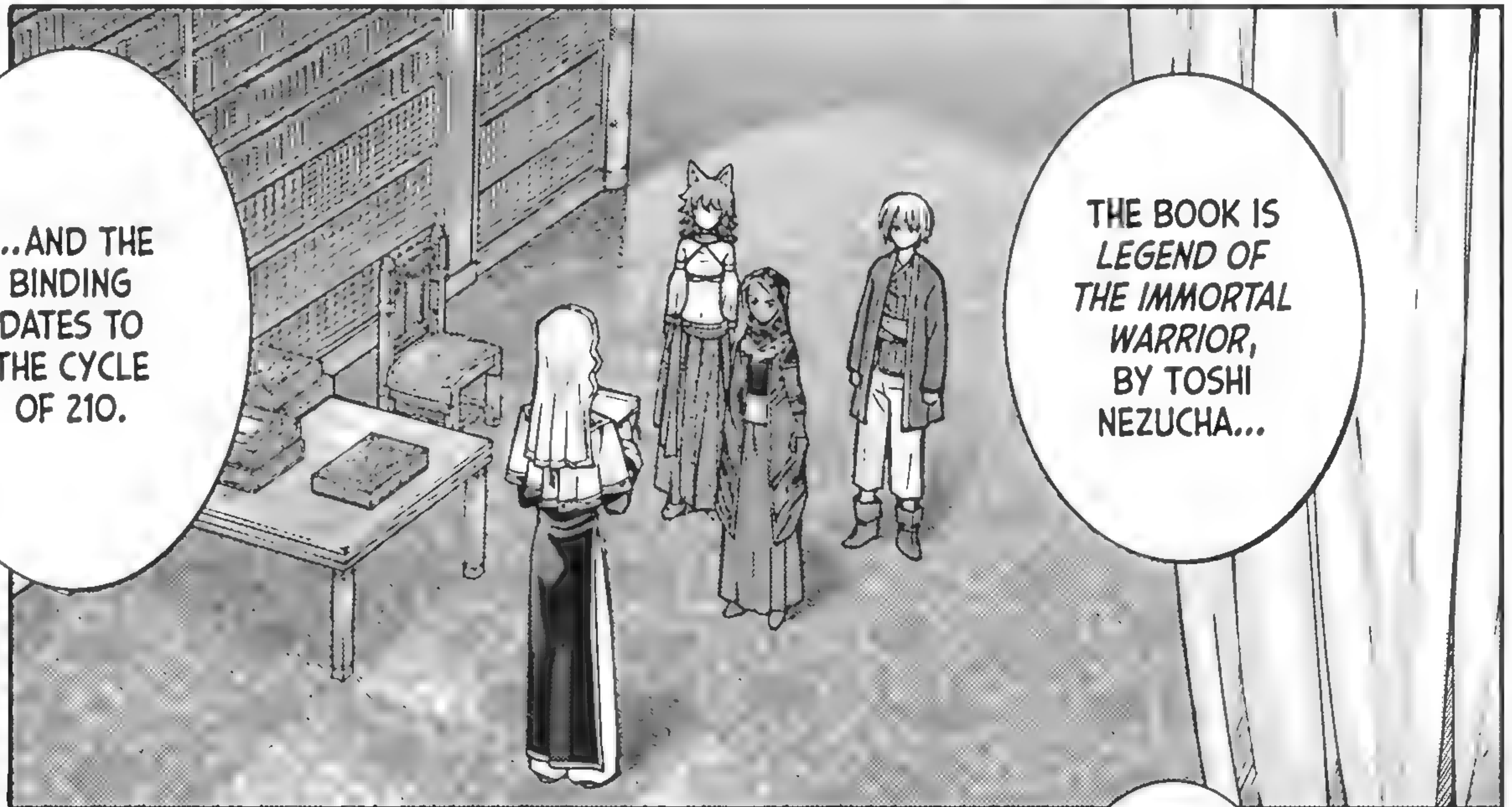
I WILL BE  
A KAFNA.  
I SWEAR  
IT.

MY  
EARNINGS  
WILL SUFFICE  
FOR US. YOU  
CAN REST,  
FATHER.





BE VIGILANT,  
FOR THE EXAM  
WILL SURELY BE  
ONE OF THOSE  
TIMES.



...AND THE  
BINDING  
DATES TO  
THE CYCLE  
OF 210.

THE BOOK IS  
LEGEND OF  
THE IMMORTAL  
WARRIOR,  
BY TOSHI  
NEZUCHA...



WE  
DID—

HOWEVER.

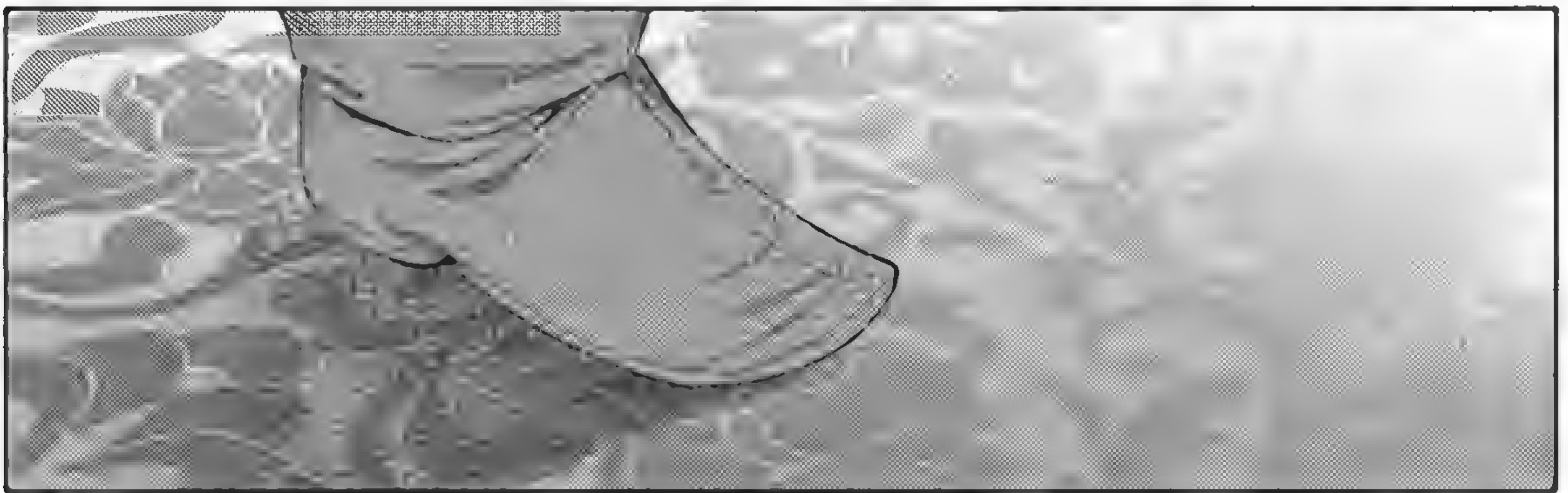


THAT IS  
CORRECT.

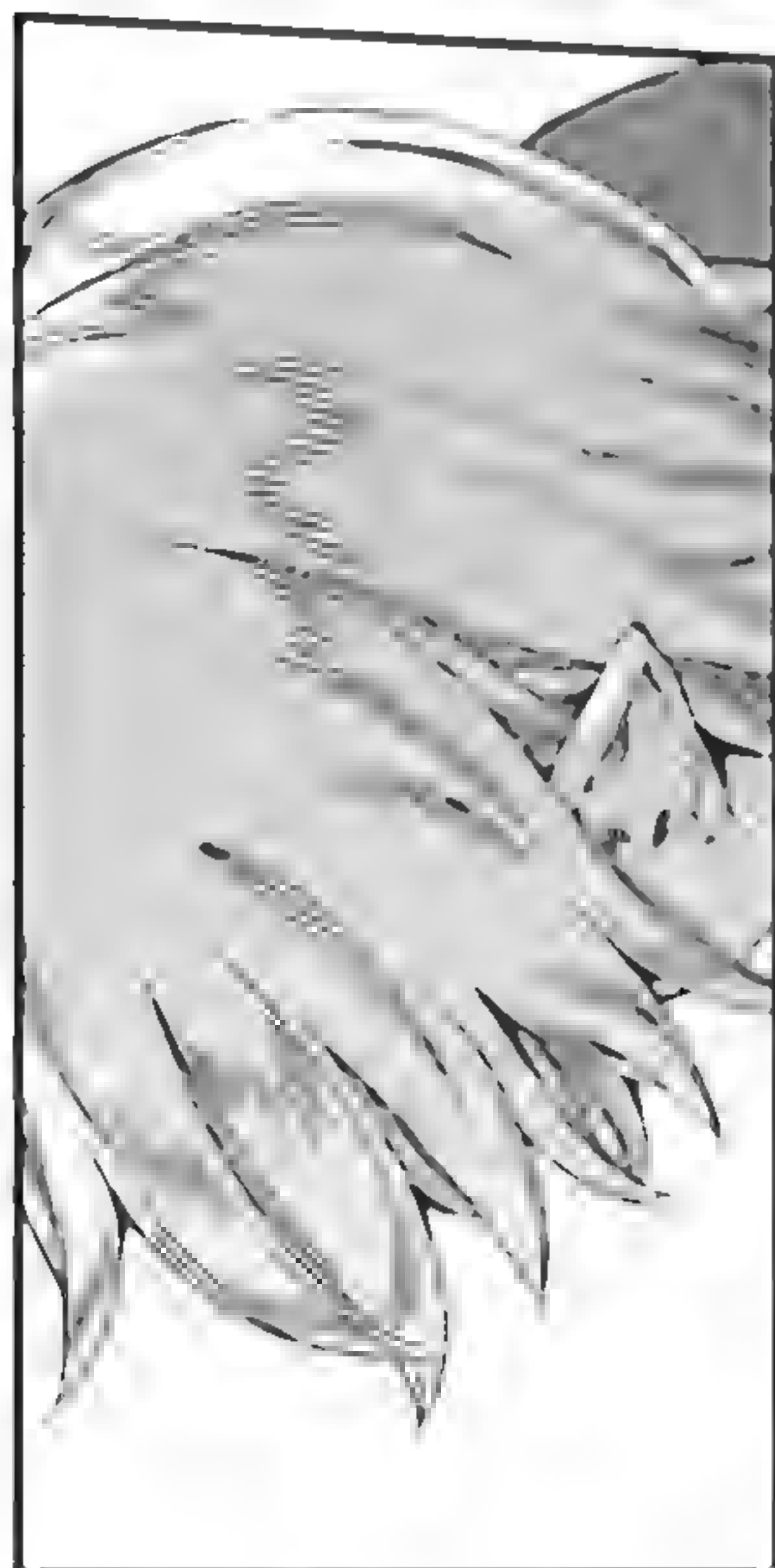




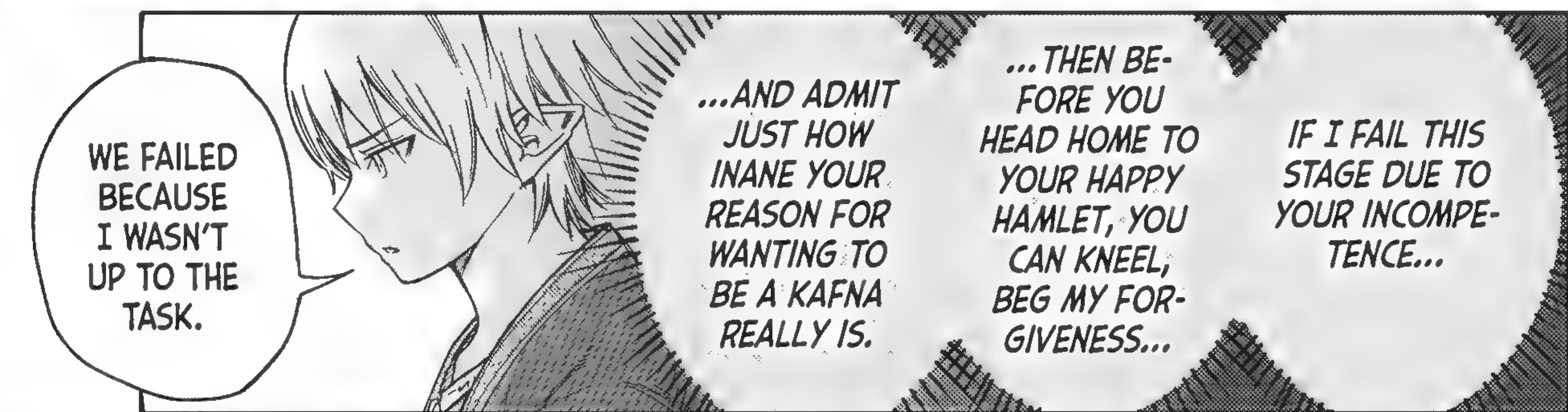












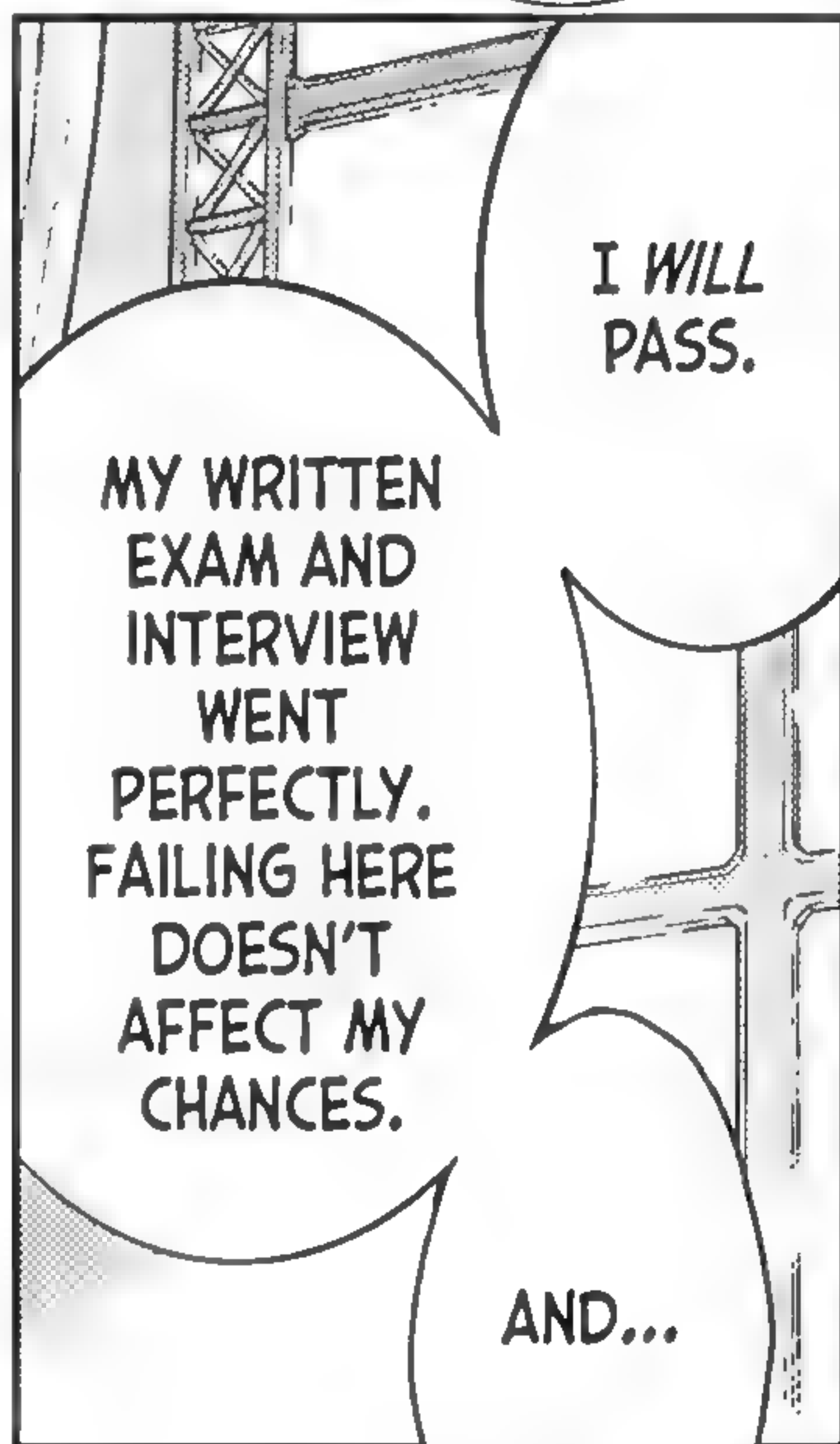




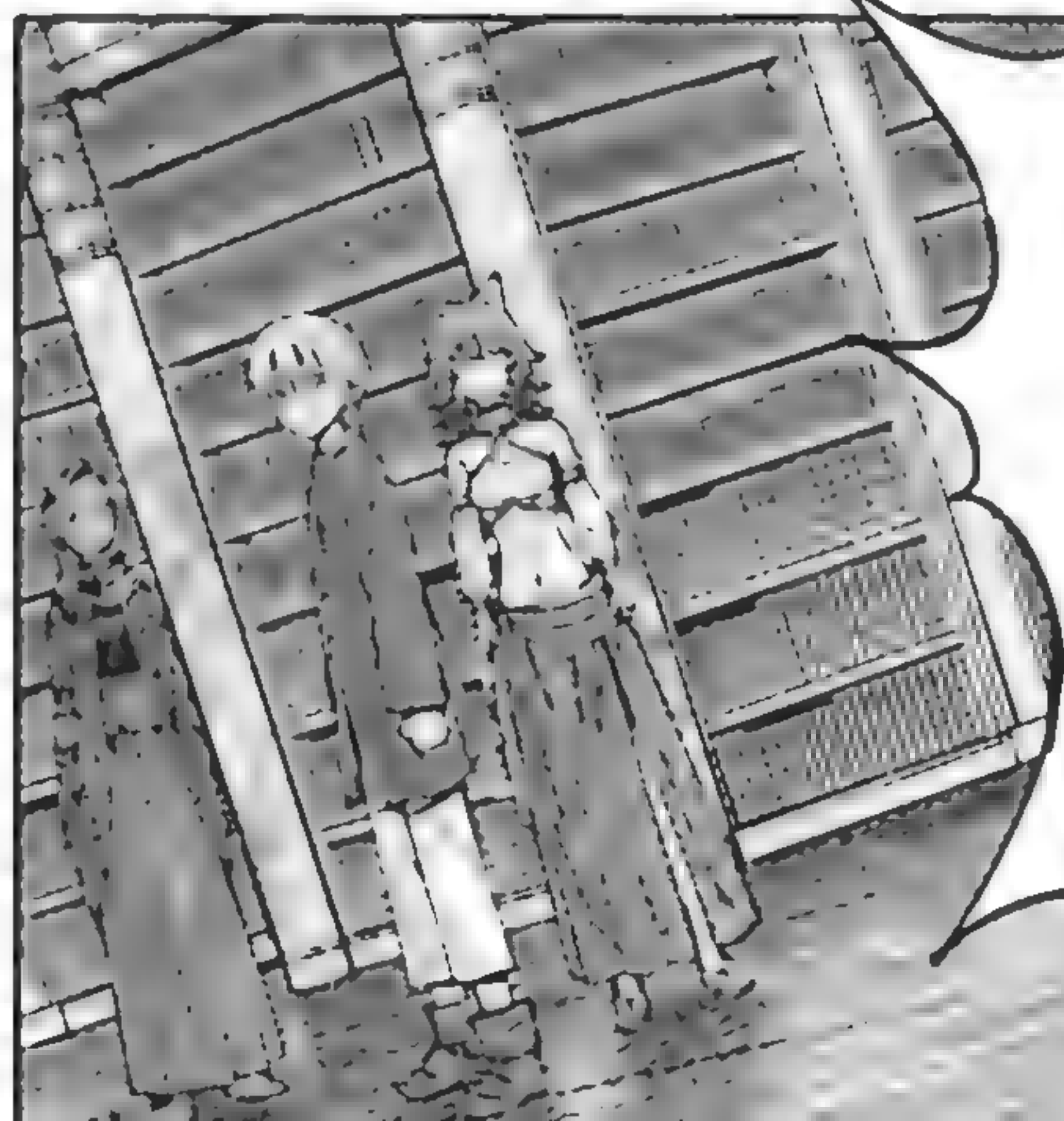
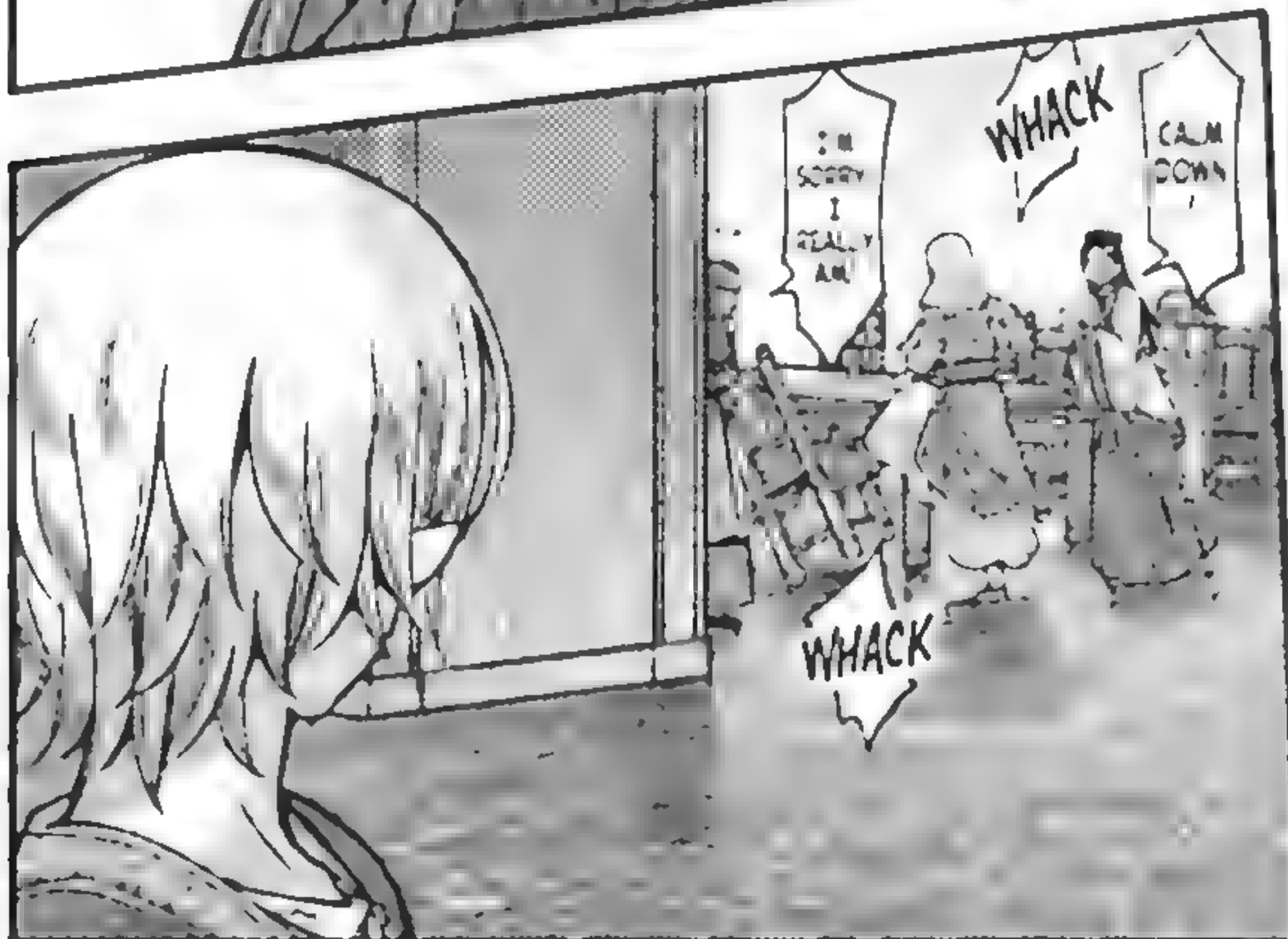
I KNOW THE  
FEELING IN  
MY HEART  
IS REAL.

THAT I  
DARED TO  
DREAM IS  
ANYTHING  
BUT SILLY.



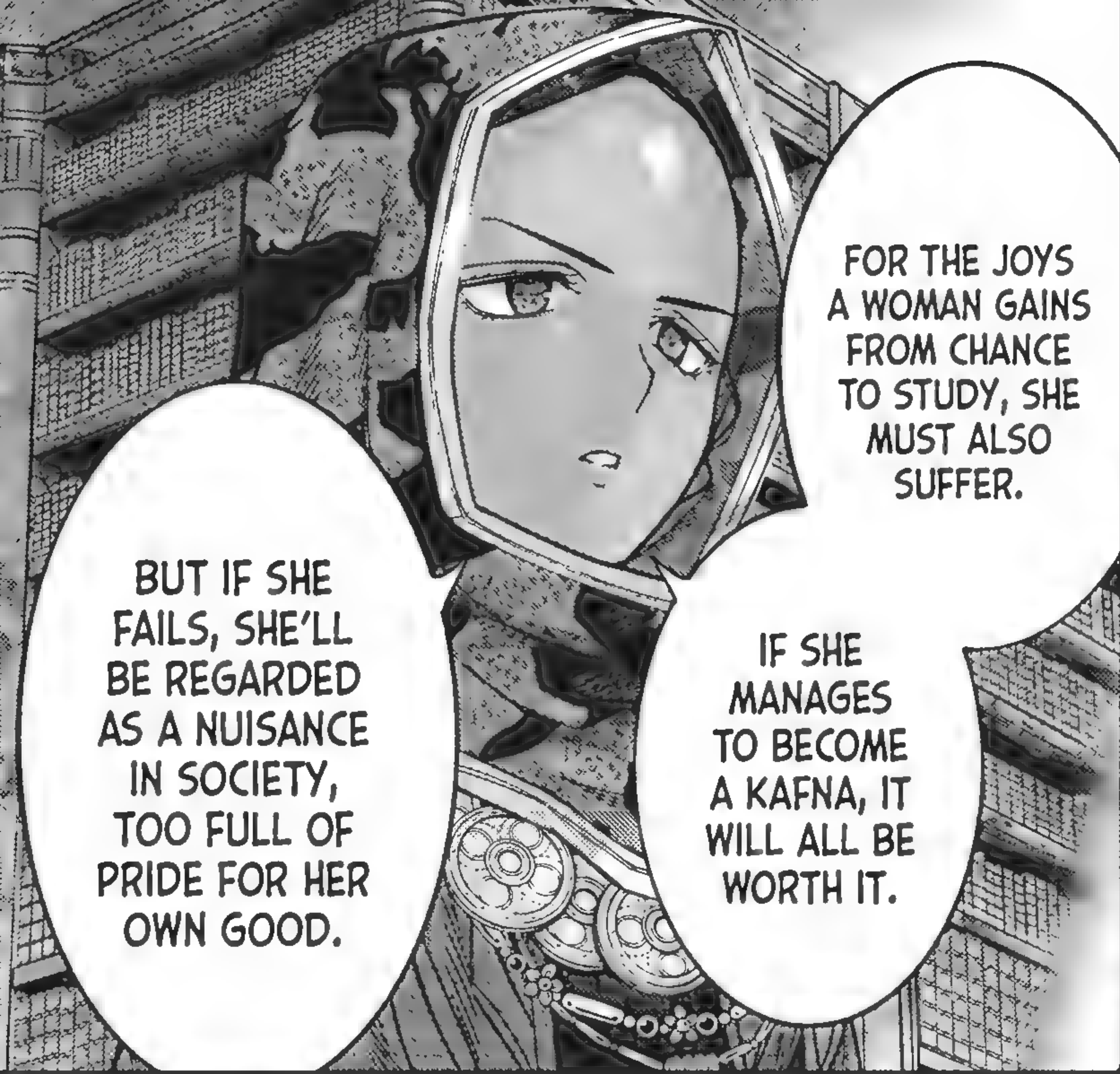






I HAD TO  
PASS THIS  
YEAR, AND  
YOU WENT  
AND BLEW  
IT FOR  
ME!





FOR THE JOYS  
A WOMAN GAINS  
FROM CHANCE  
TO STUDY, SHE  
MUST ALSO  
SUFFER.

BUT IF SHE  
FAILS, SHE'LL  
BE REGARDED  
AS A NUISANCE  
IN SOCIETY,  
TOO FULL OF  
PRIDE FOR HER  
OWN GOOD.

IF SHE  
MANAGES  
TO BECOME  
A KAFNA, IT  
WILL ALL BE  
WORTH IT.



I UNDERSTAND  
HOW SHE FEELS.  
WHEN HOPE IS  
LOST, IT'S EASY  
TO IGNORE OUR  
OWN SHORTCOM-  
INGS AND BLAME  
OTHERS.



THE  
OUTCOME  
OF THE TEST  
SETS OUR  
COURSE IN  
LIFE.

THAT IS  
WHAT'S AT  
STAKE.



WHAT'RE  
YOU...  
?!

RELEASE  
ME THIS  
INSTANT!

YOU  
TWO  
ARE THE  
**BEST!**  
NUZZLE  
NUZZLE

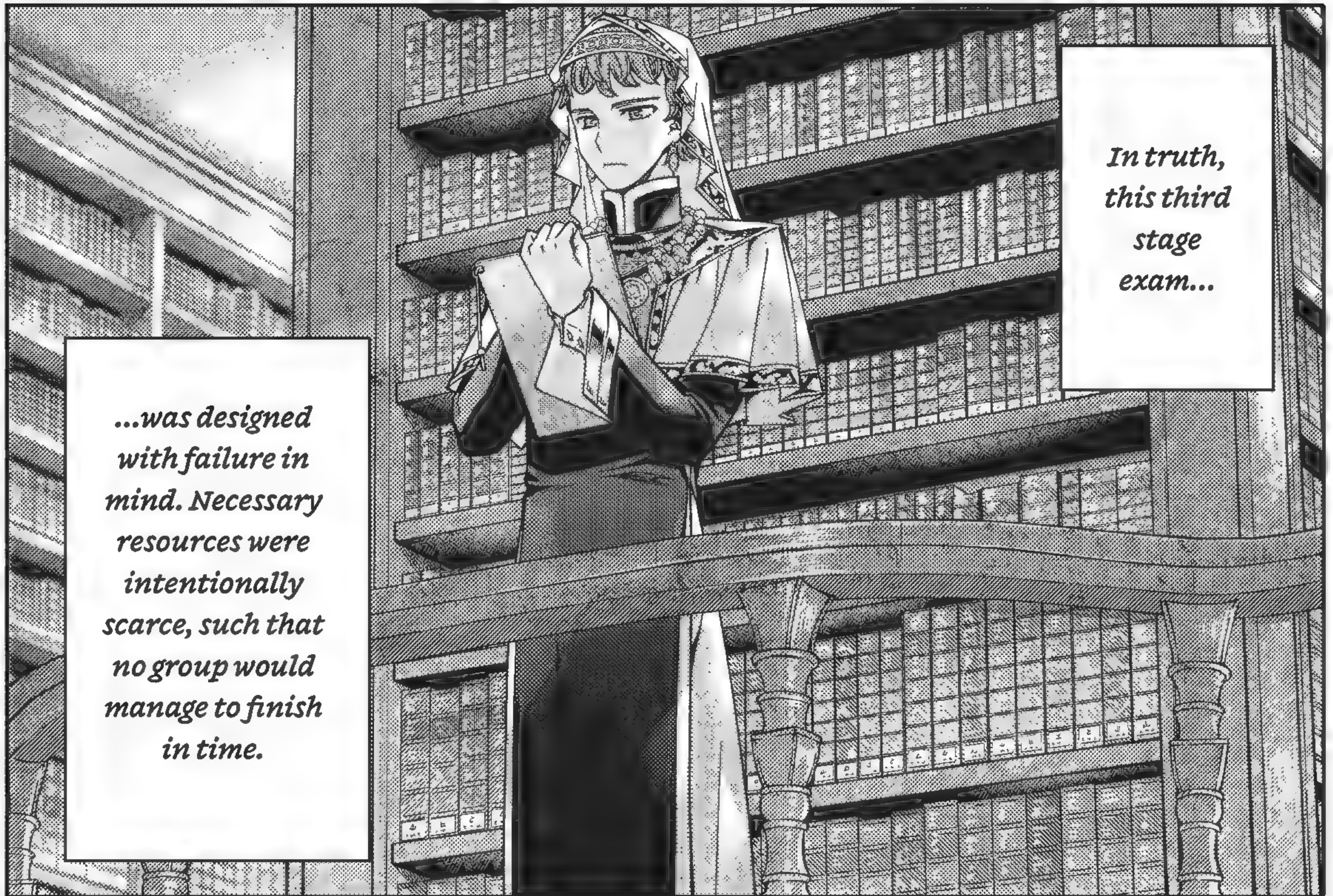
UM!  
OHGGA  
?!

FWING

HEY,  
BUT  
STILL!

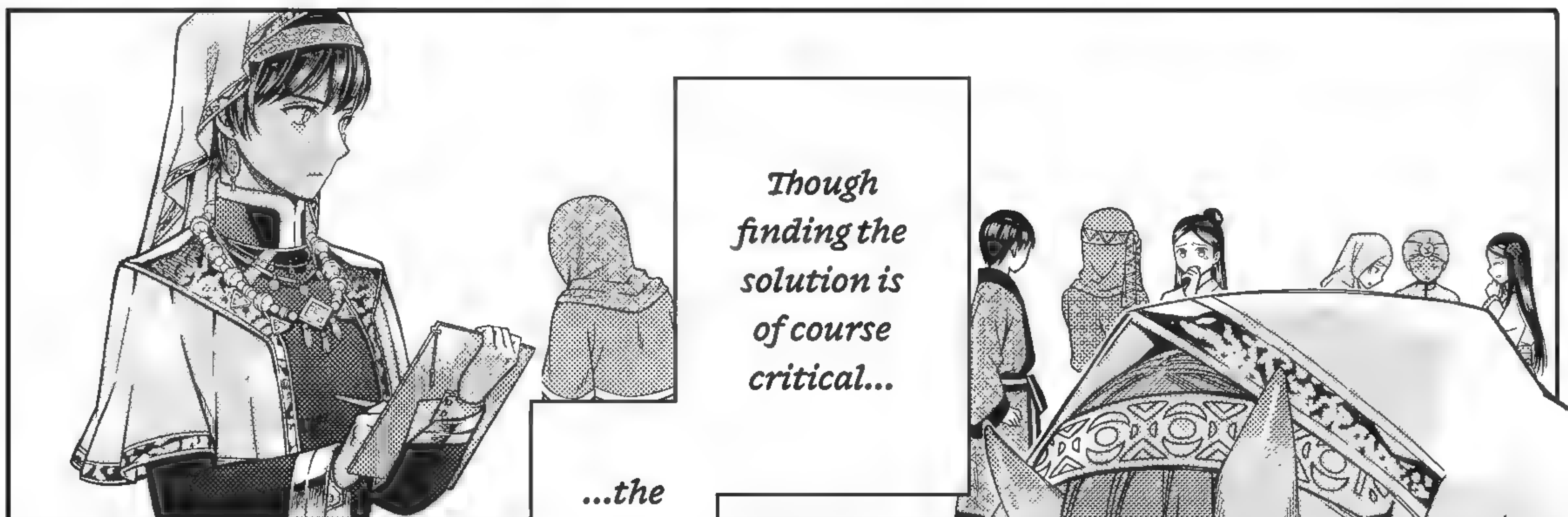
WE MAY NOT  
HAVE PASSED,  
BUT I'M REALLY  
GLAD I GOT TO  
BE A PART OF  
THIS GROUP,  
Y'KNOW?!





*...was designed  
with failure in  
mind. Necessary  
resources were  
intentionally  
scarce, such that  
no group would  
manage to finish  
in time.*

*In truth,  
this third  
stage  
exam...*



*Though  
finding the  
solution is  
of course  
critical...*

*...the  
kafna  
knew...*



*...that the  
process by  
which is it  
found is  
equally so.*





*When  
difficulties  
arose,  
how did  
the group  
overcome  
them?*



*How did the  
members  
determine  
the roles  
they would  
fill?*



*And in the end,  
when told they'd  
been unable  
to meet the  
requirements...*

*...with what mindset  
did they look back upon  
the efforts of their  
companions?*

*...of any one  
individual's  
talents...*

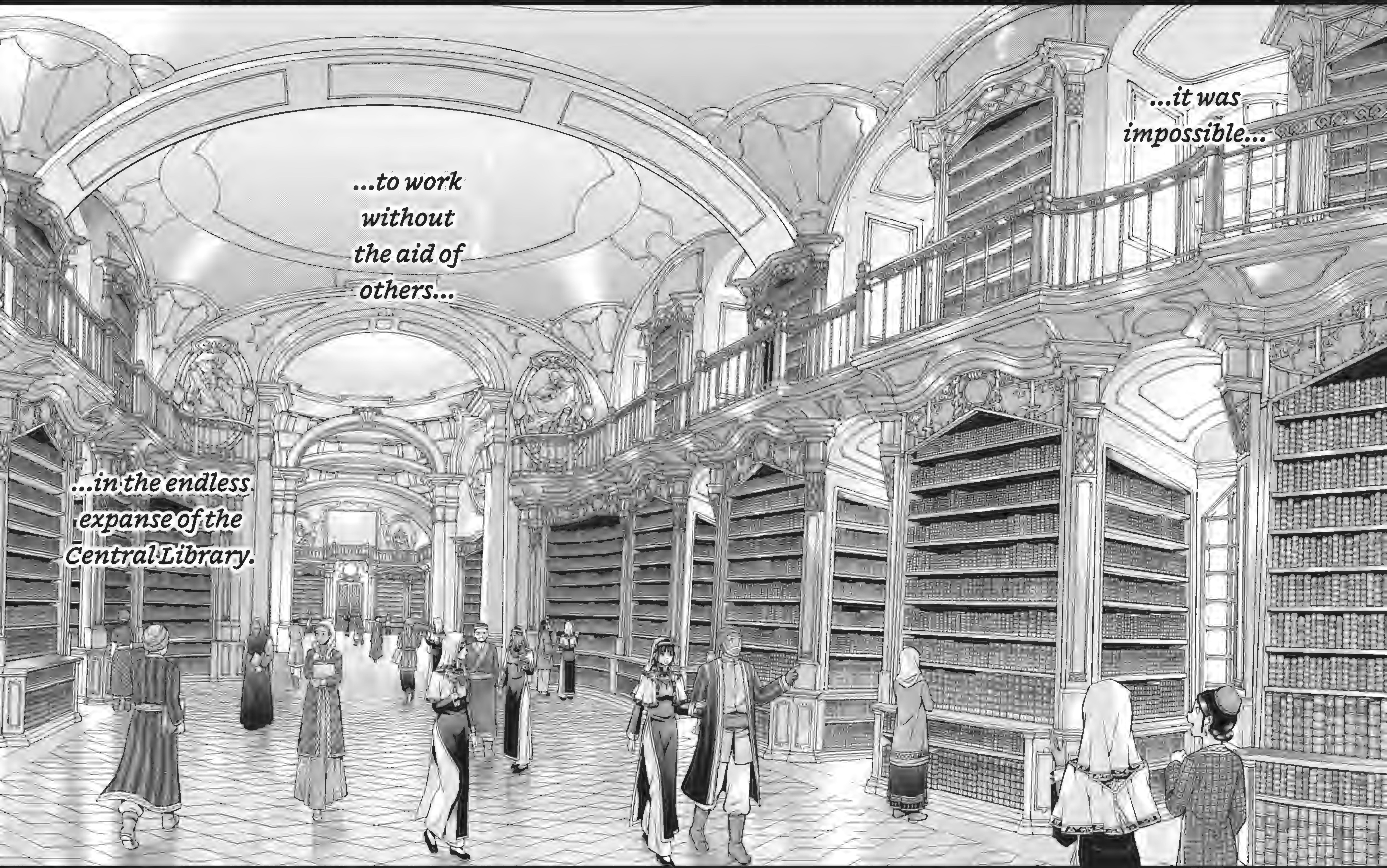
*Because no  
matter the  
extent...*



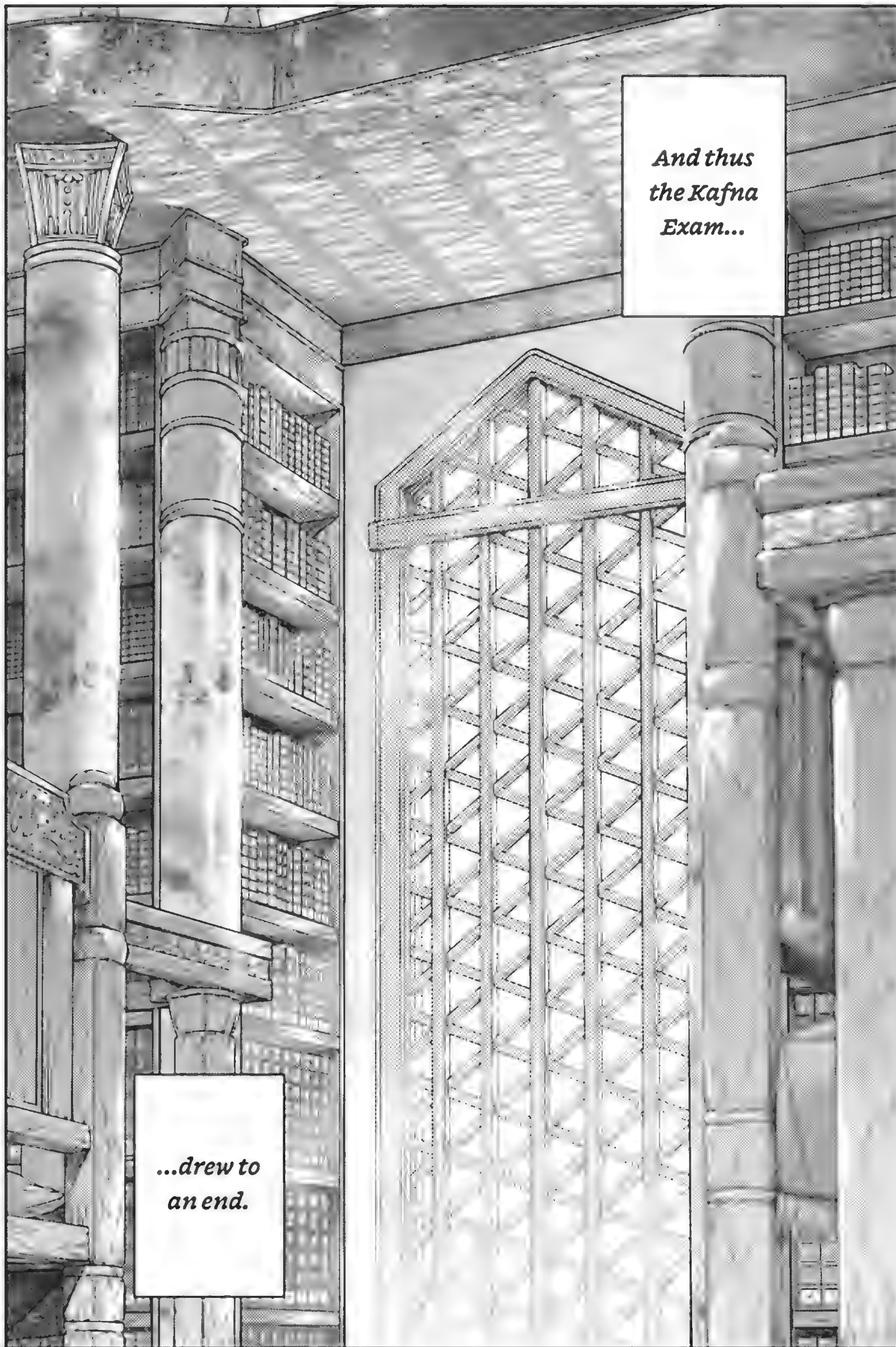
*...it was  
impossible...*

*...to work  
without  
the aid of  
others...*

*...in the endless  
expanse of the  
Central Library.*



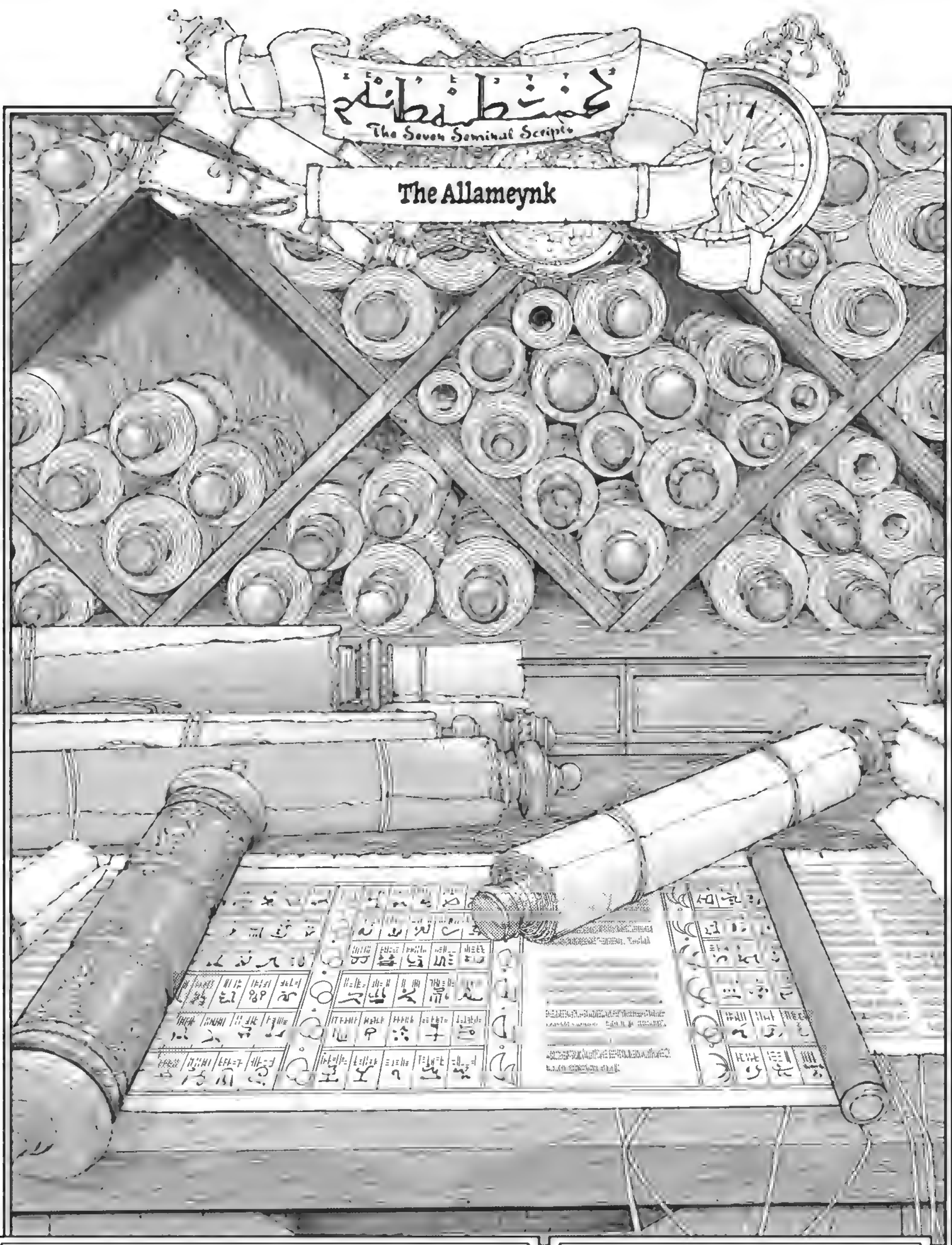




*And thus  
the Kafna  
Exam...*

*...drew to  
an end.*





[Author] The Rakta People

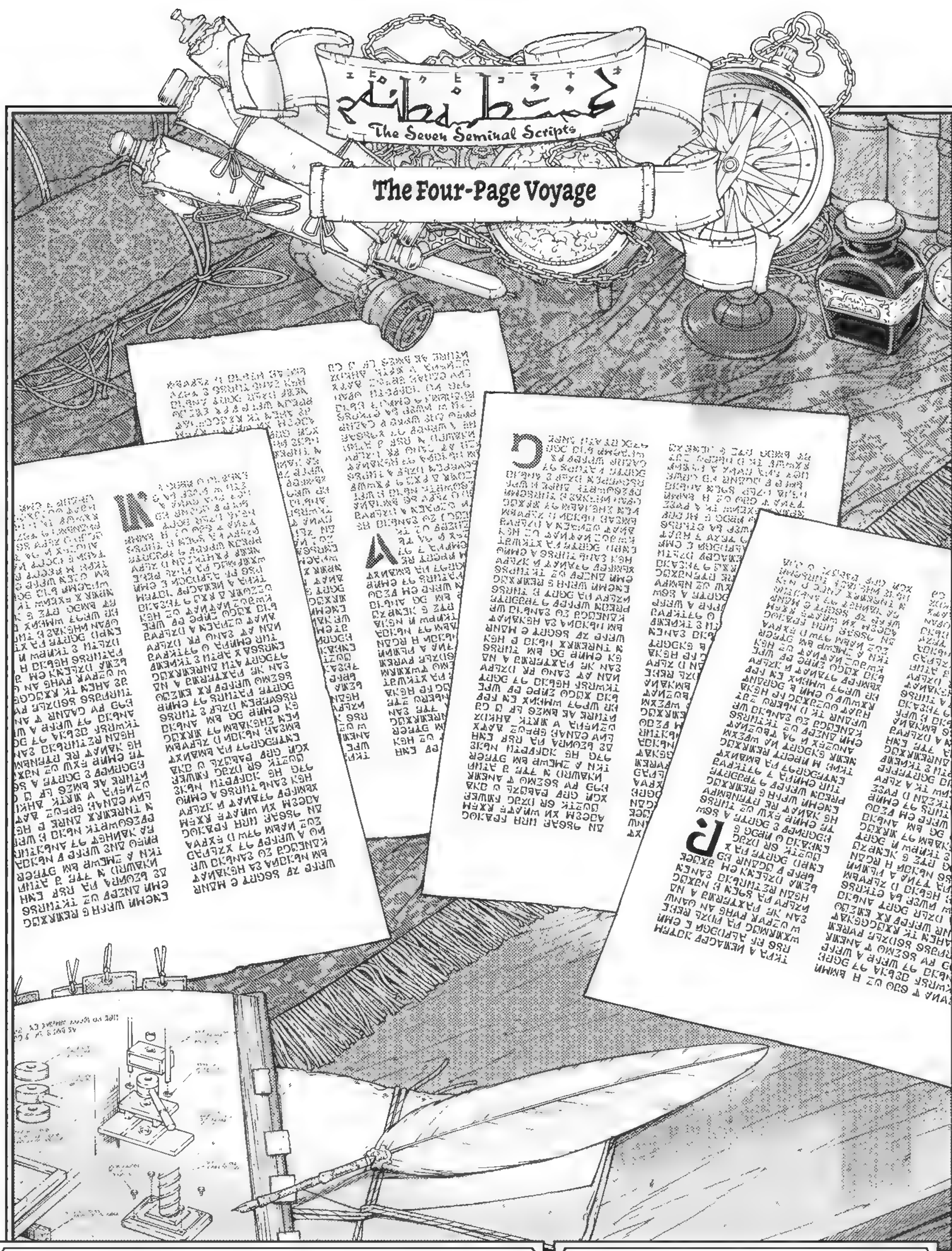
[Date] 758 Years Ago

**One of the Seven Seminal Scripts.**

**A long-count calendar devised by the Rakta.**

**Completion of the Allameynk saw a shift from a simple heliacal calendar to a more accurate dual-calendar system based on the movement of the world's two moons. The Allameynk includes an accurate extrapolation spanning hundreds of years from its date of creation, even accounting for leap years. However, it abruptly comes to an end on its 763th repetition, fueling modern superstition that the world may be counting down its final years.**





[Author] Tsune Shiro

[Date] 391 Years Ago

One of the Seven Seminal Scripts.

The world's first printed novel, produced using cast-metal moveable type devised by the noted metalsmith Tsune Shiro.

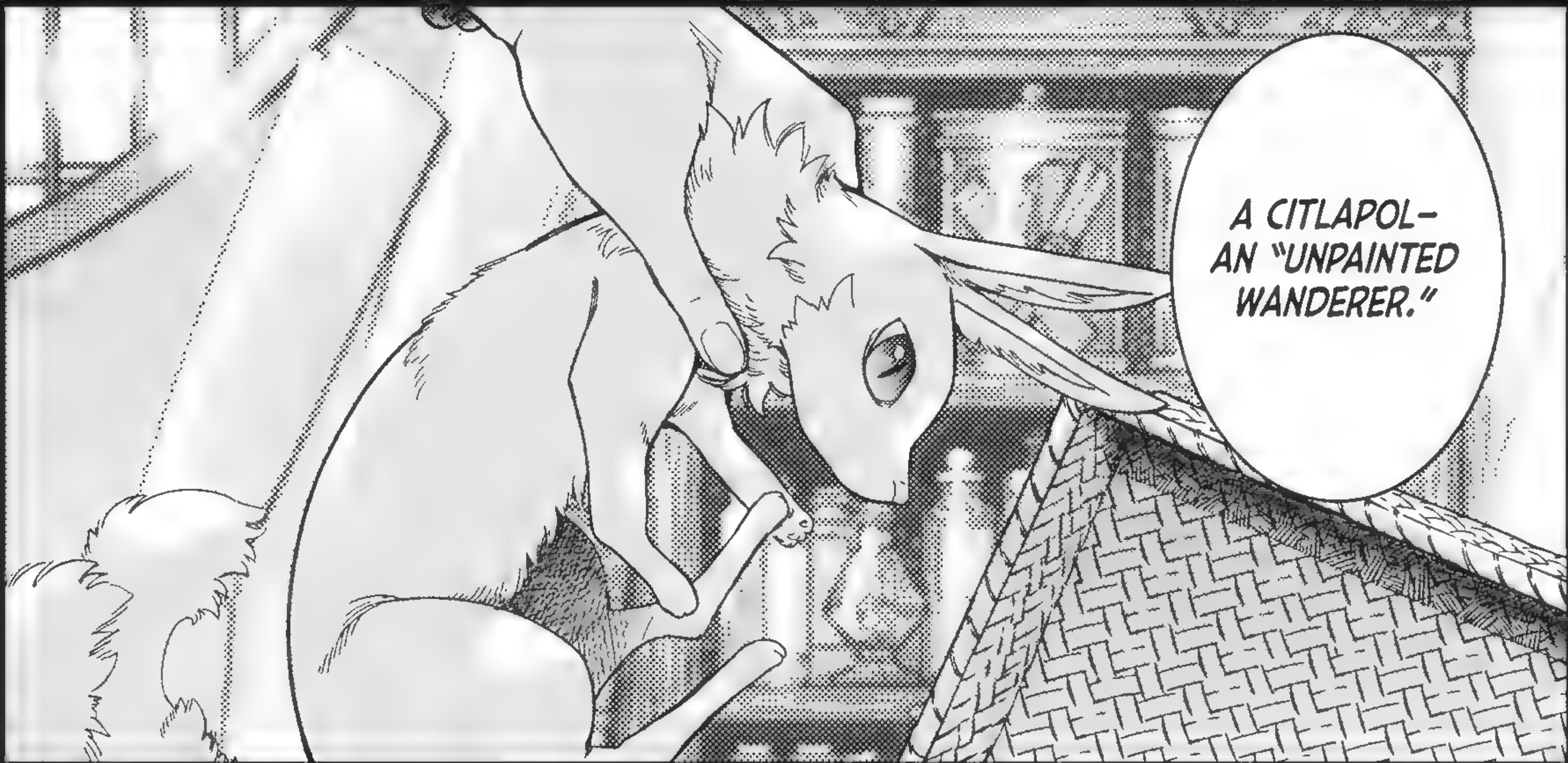
The story itself is somewhat aimless—not much more than a practice exercise penned for the purpose of testing the new printing method.

But Shiro's voyage singlehandedly transformed books from an item enjoyed by a privileged few into something accessible to all the continent's people.









A CITLAPOL—  
AN "UNPAINTED  
WANDERER."



AND  
WHAT DO  
I INTEND,  
YOU ASK?

I'M GOING  
TO SEAL  
YOU AWAY  
INSIDE.



ARE YOU  
FAMILIAR  
WITH  
THEM?

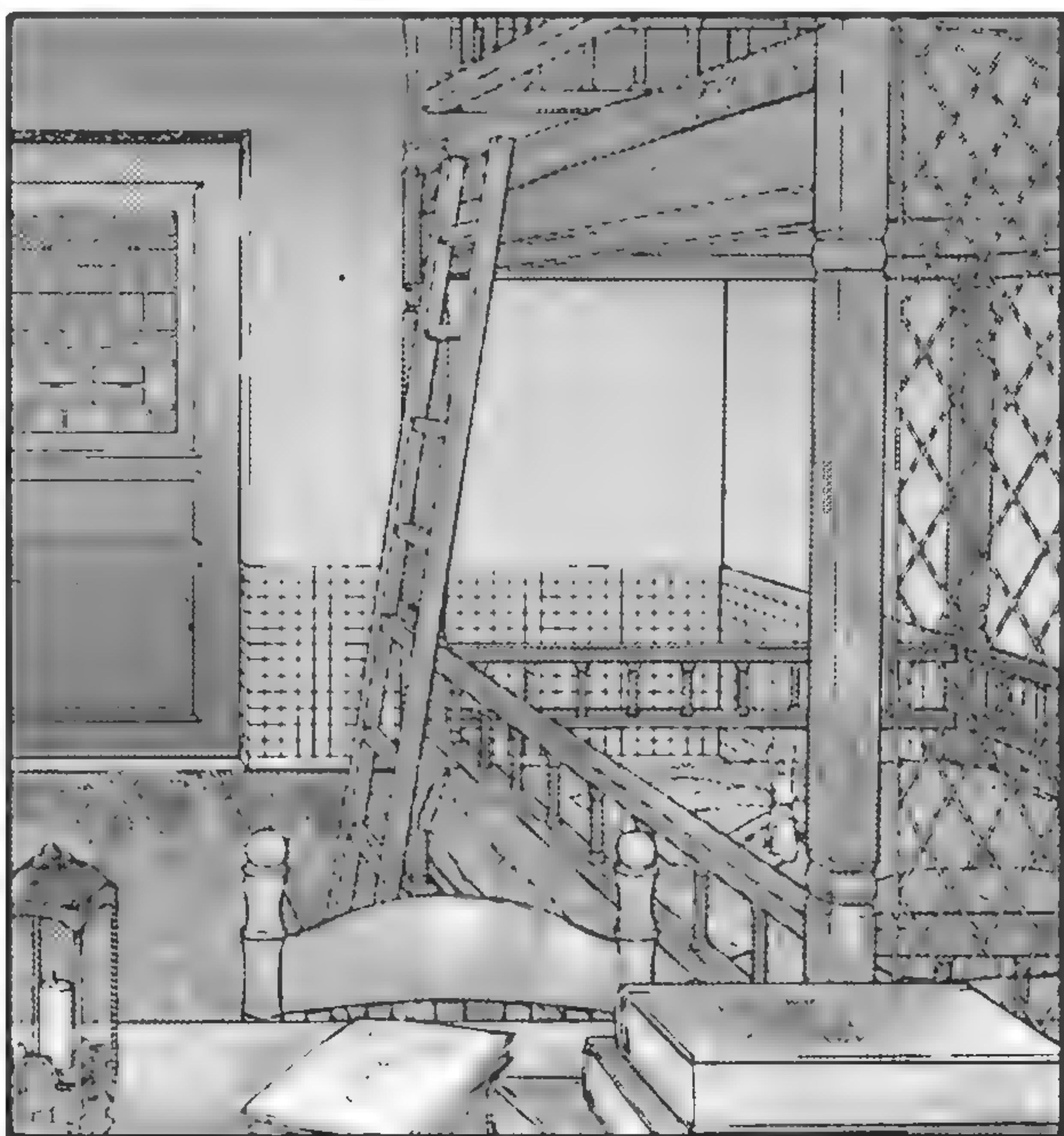
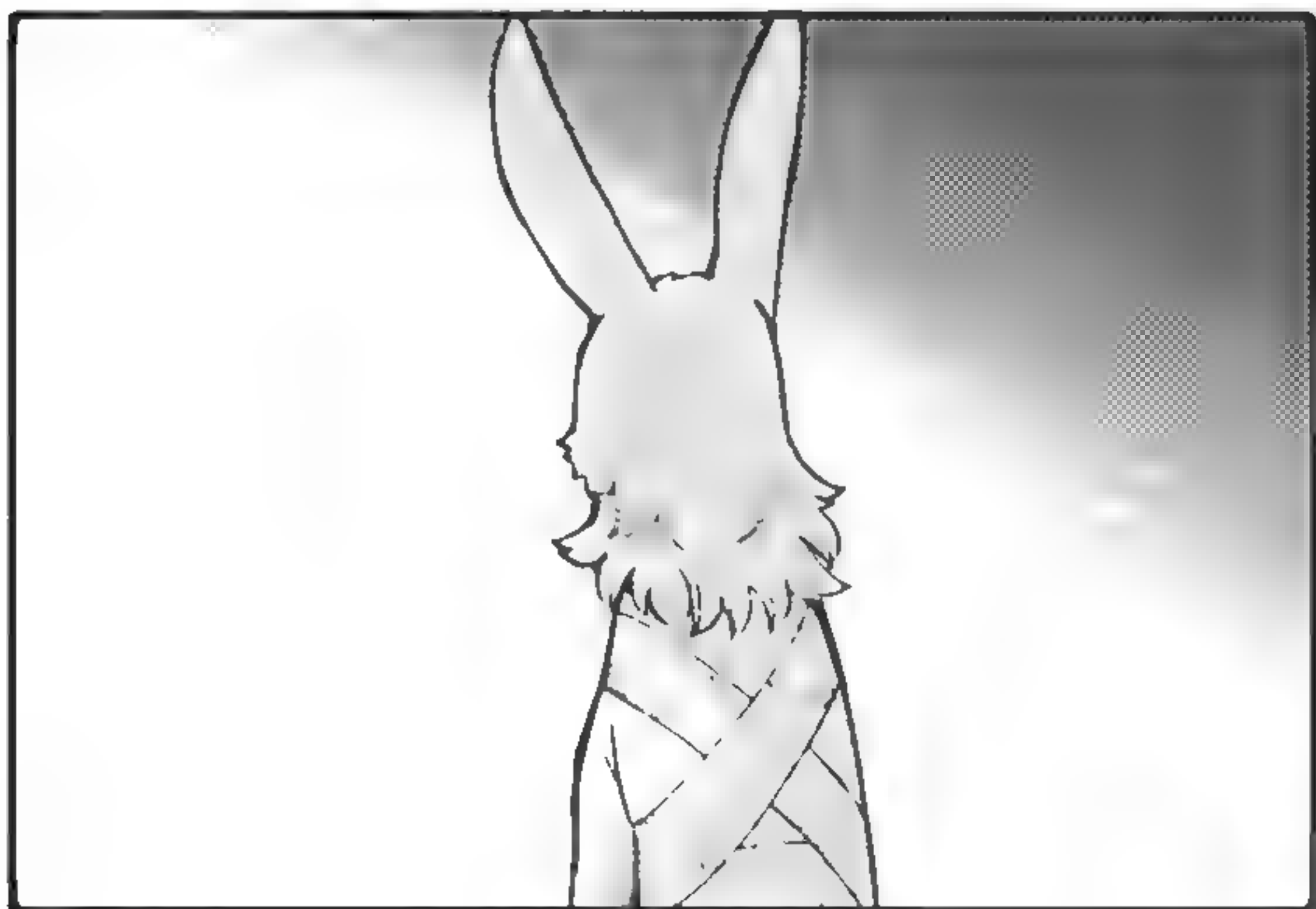
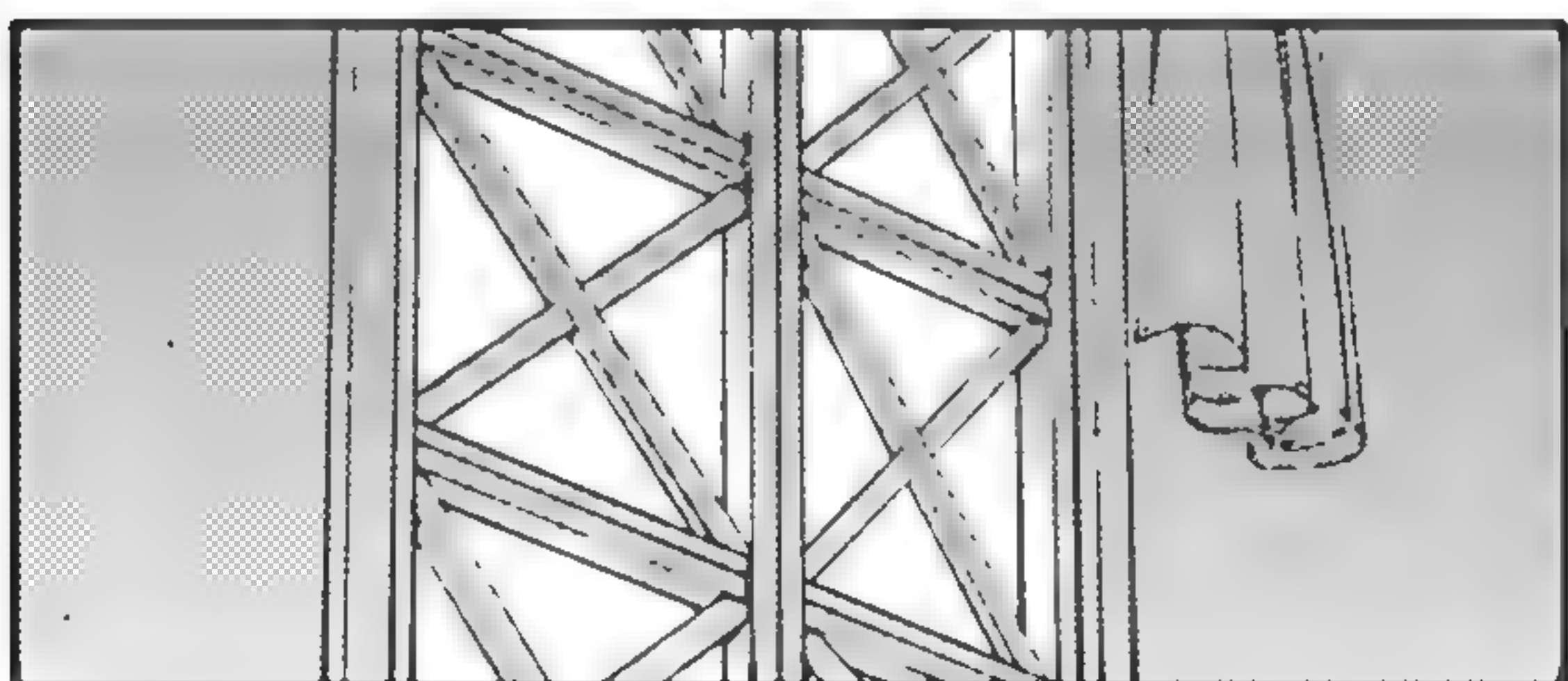
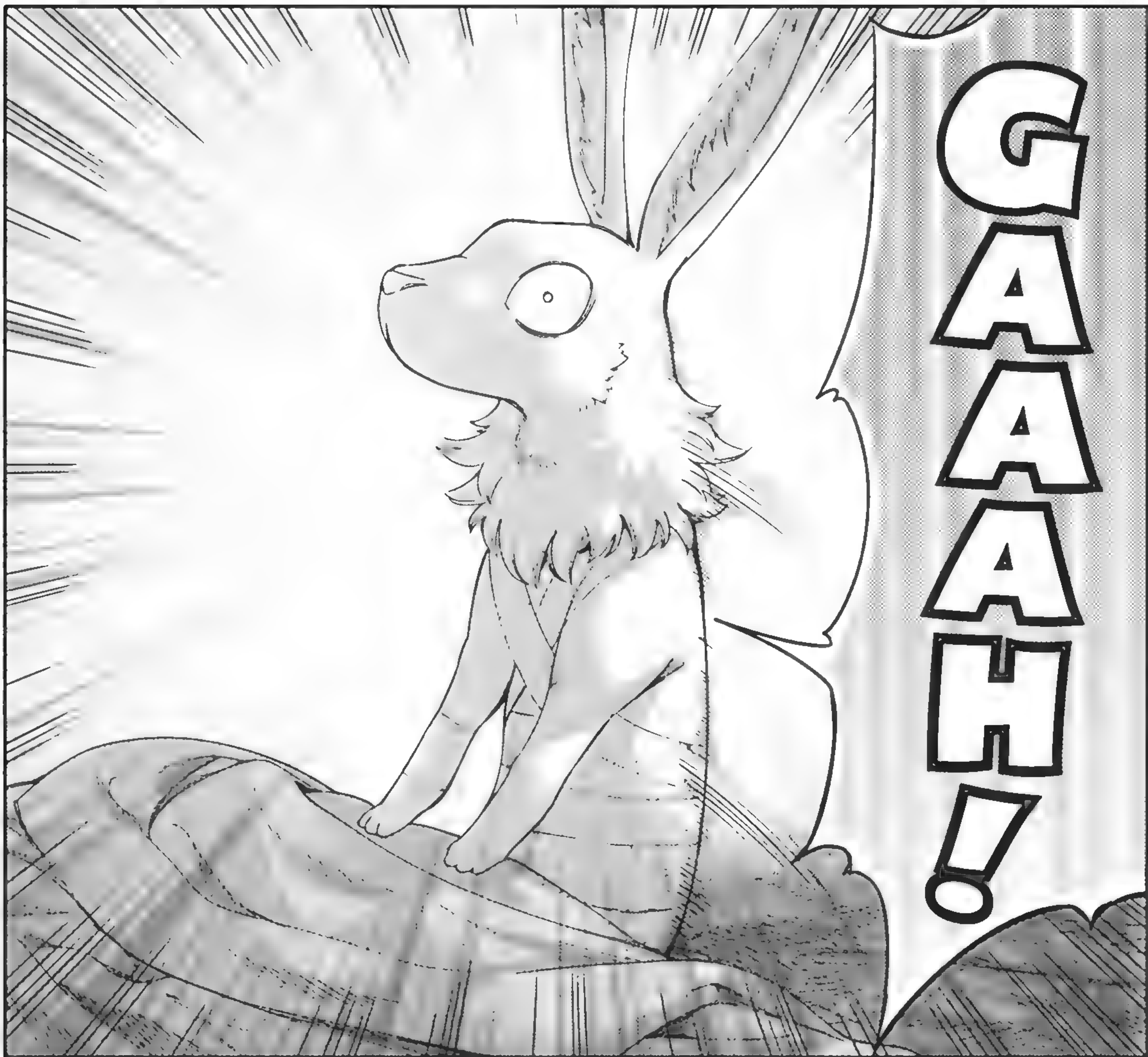
CREATURES  
BORN PERFECTLY  
WHITE. VESSELS  
PURE ENOUGH TO  
HOUSE UNTOLD  
QUANTITIES OF  
MANA.



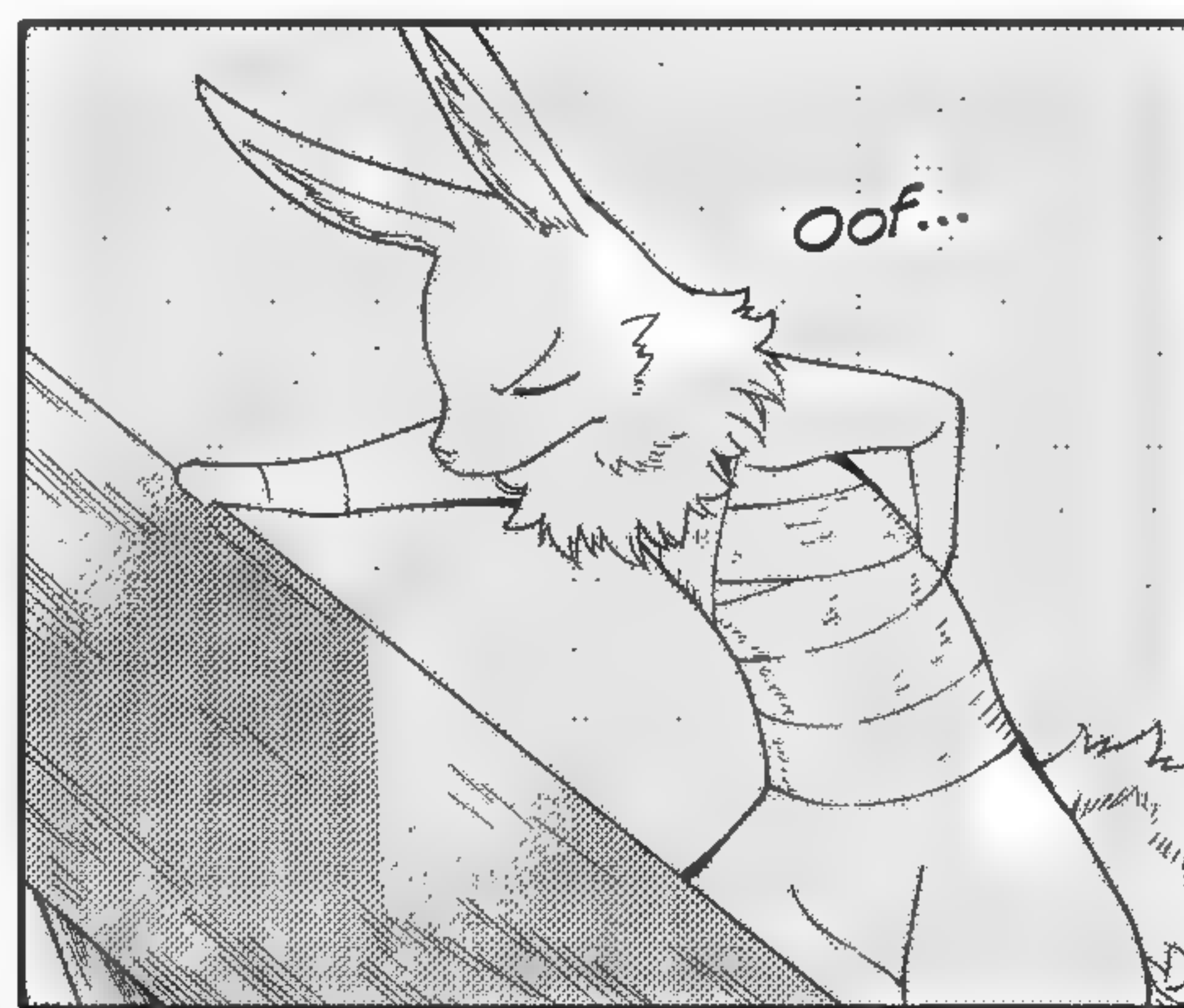
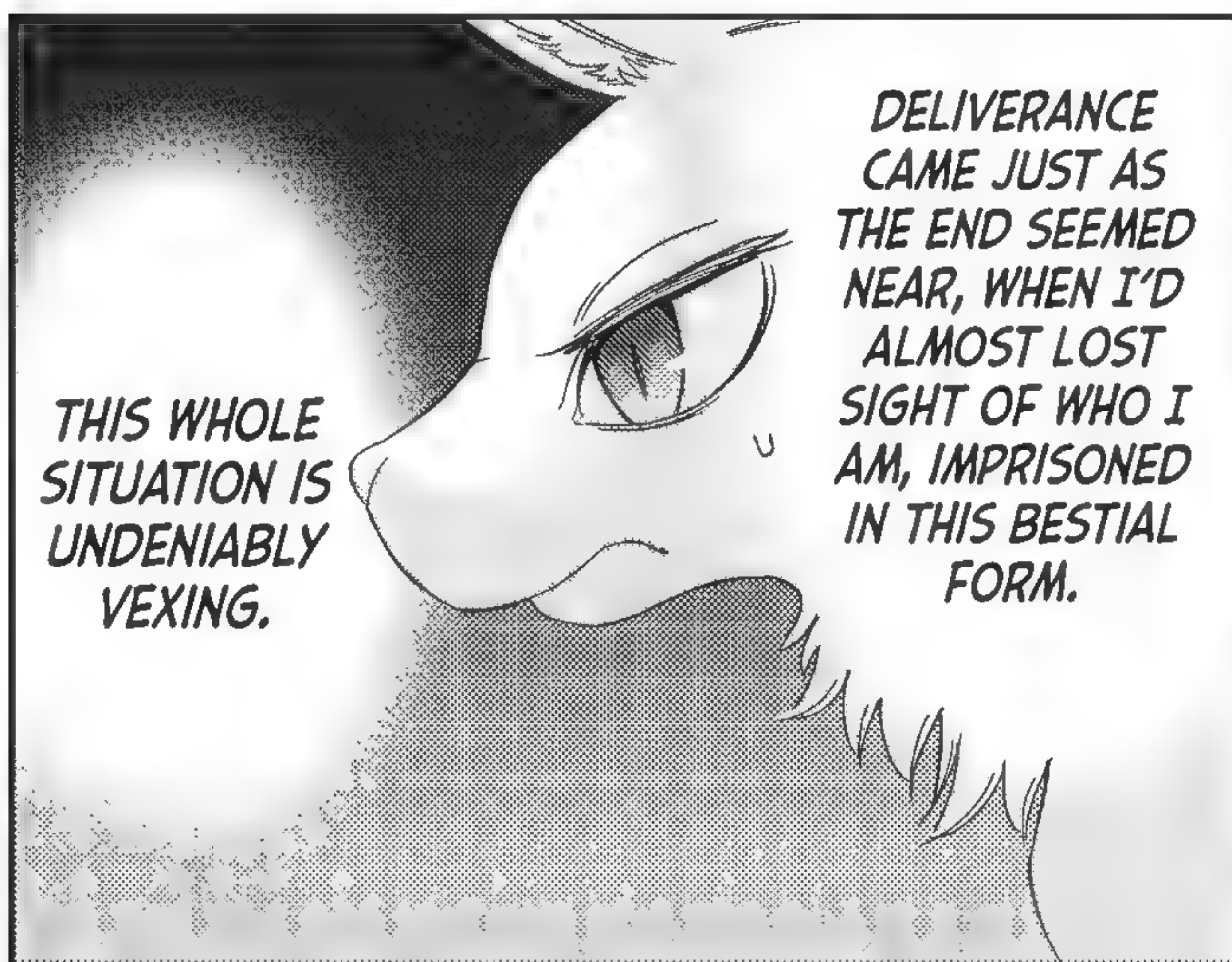
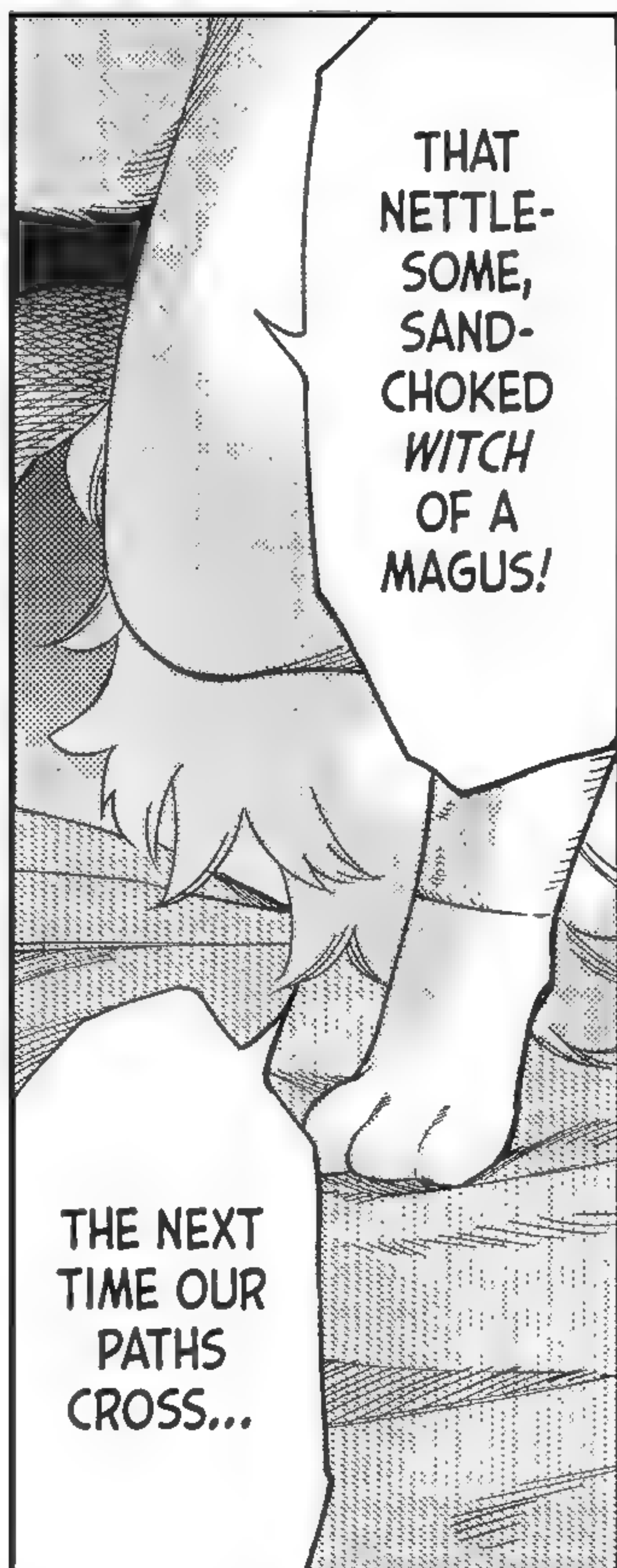
YOU'LL  
SPEND  
THE REST  
OF YOUR  
DAYS AS A  
COMMON  
BEAST...

...WALLOWING  
IN REGRET OVER  
ALL THE AWFUL,  
NAUGHTY THINGS  
YOU'VE DONE.

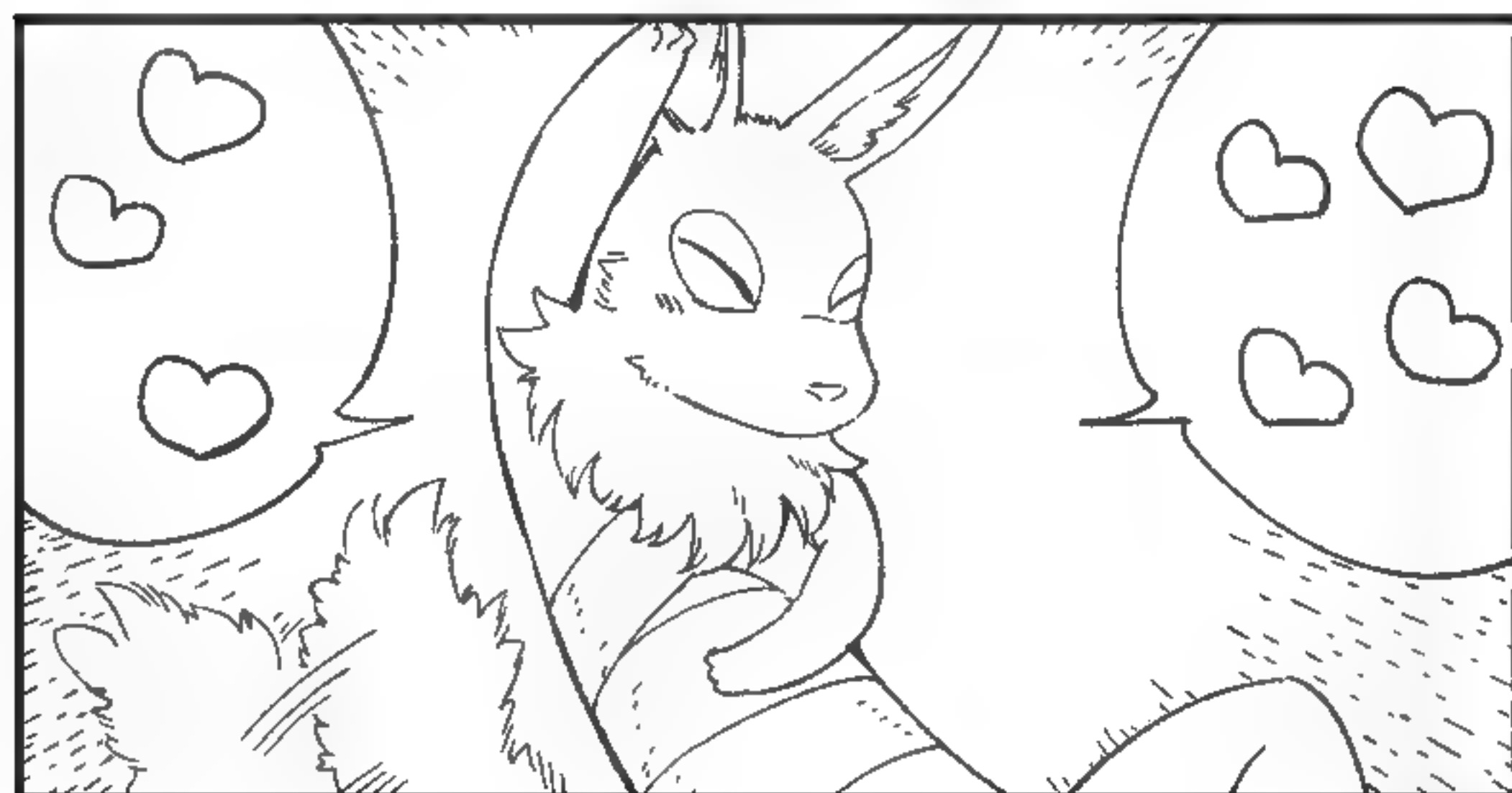
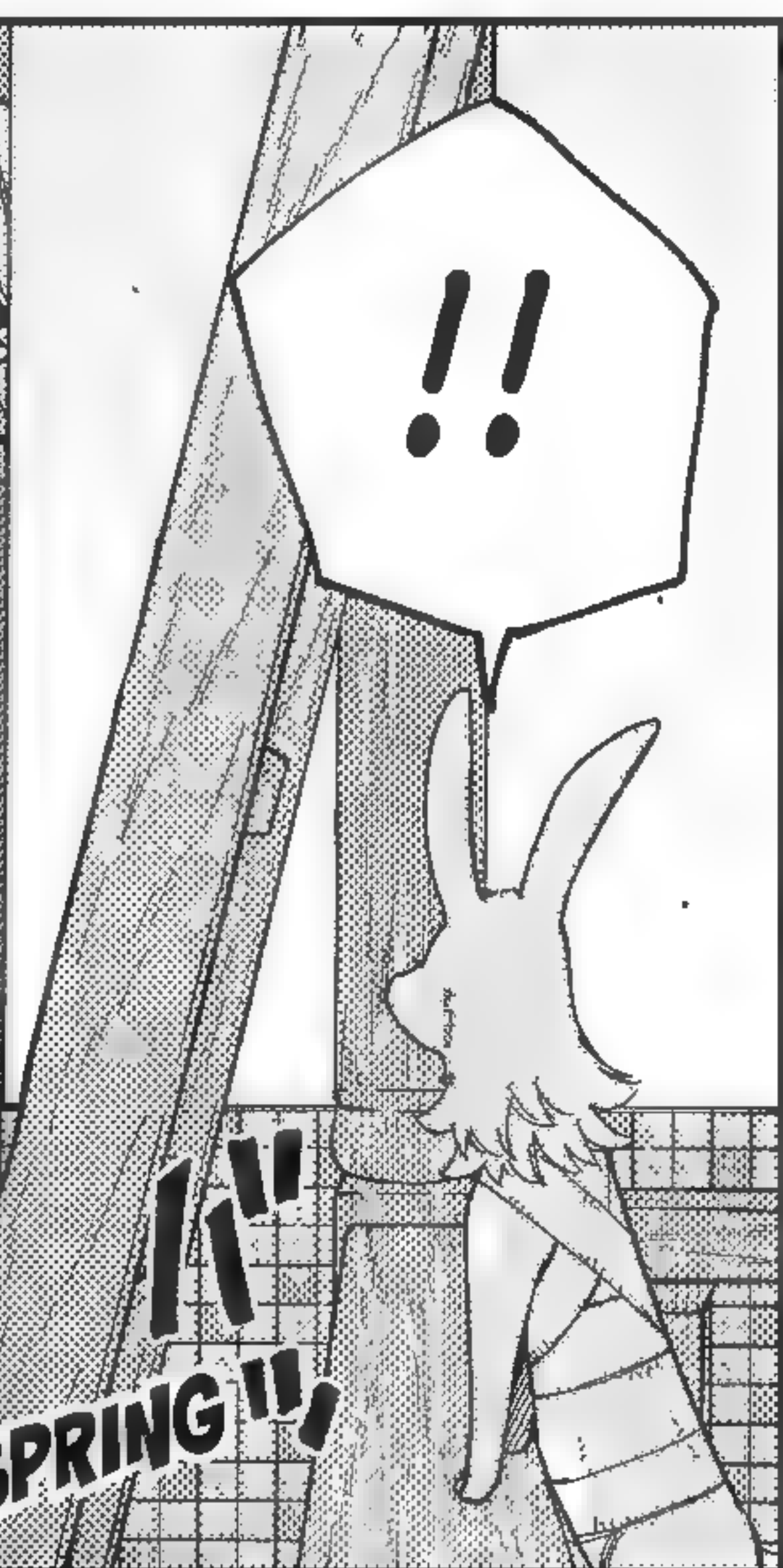
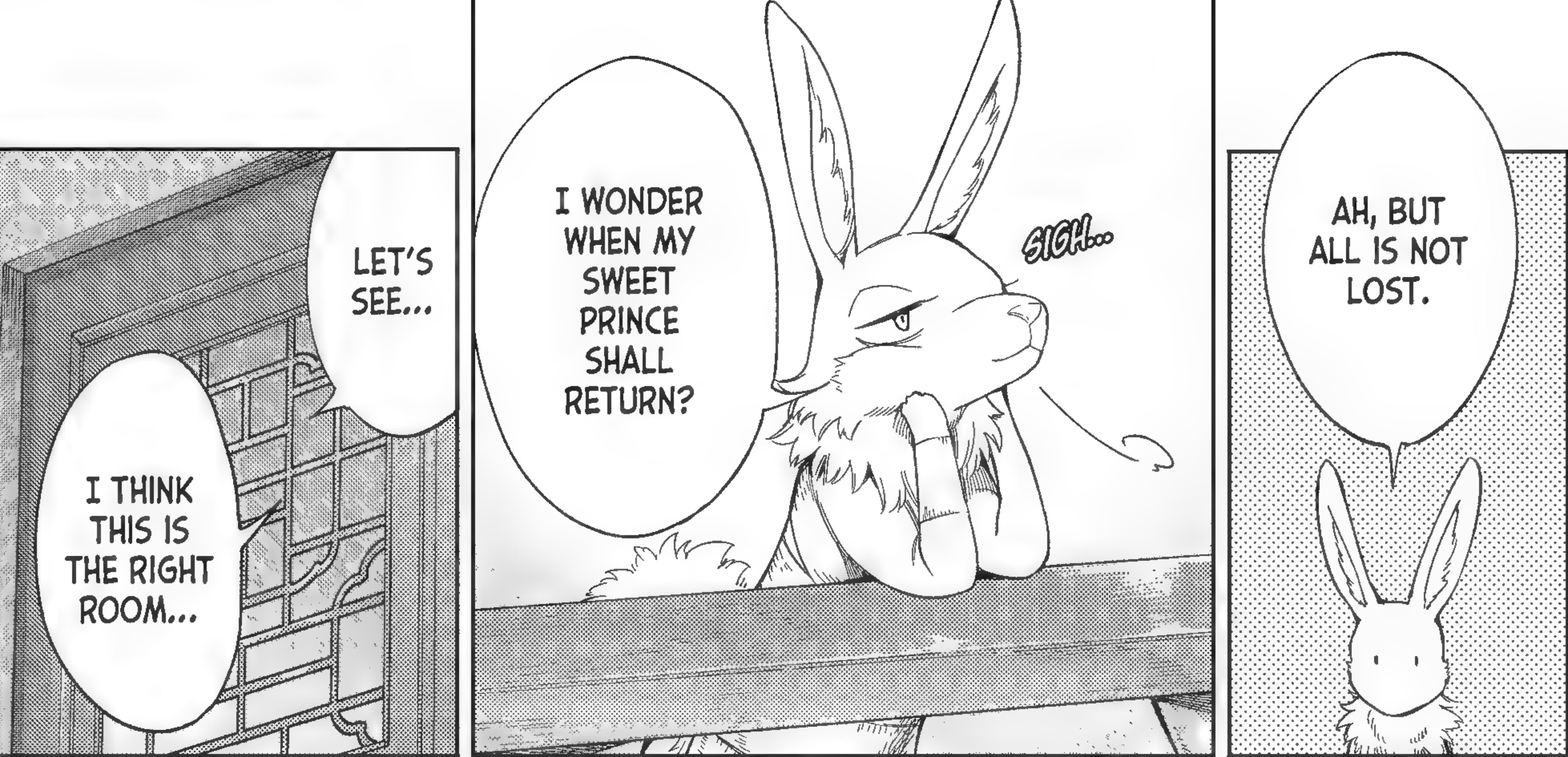




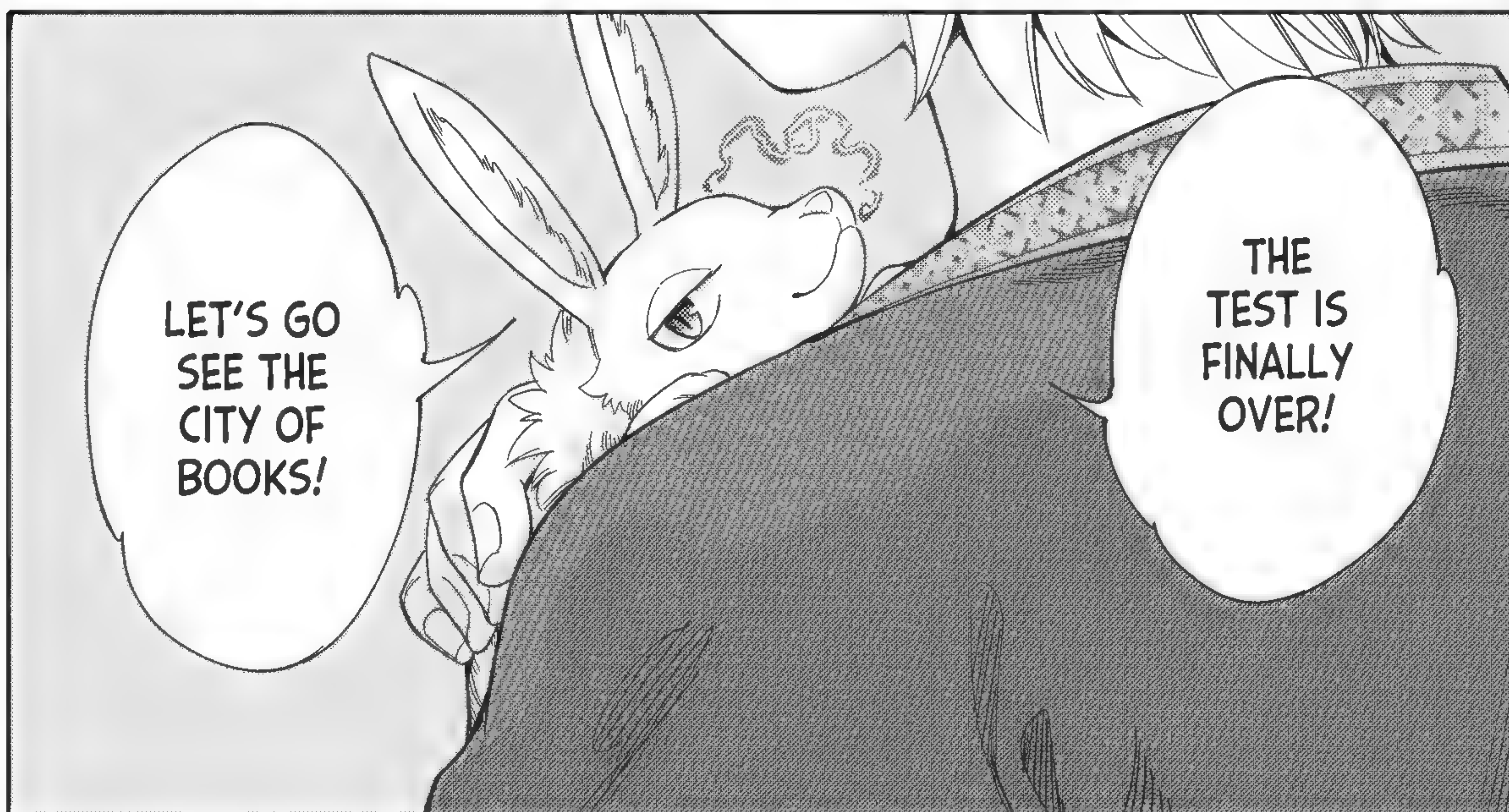








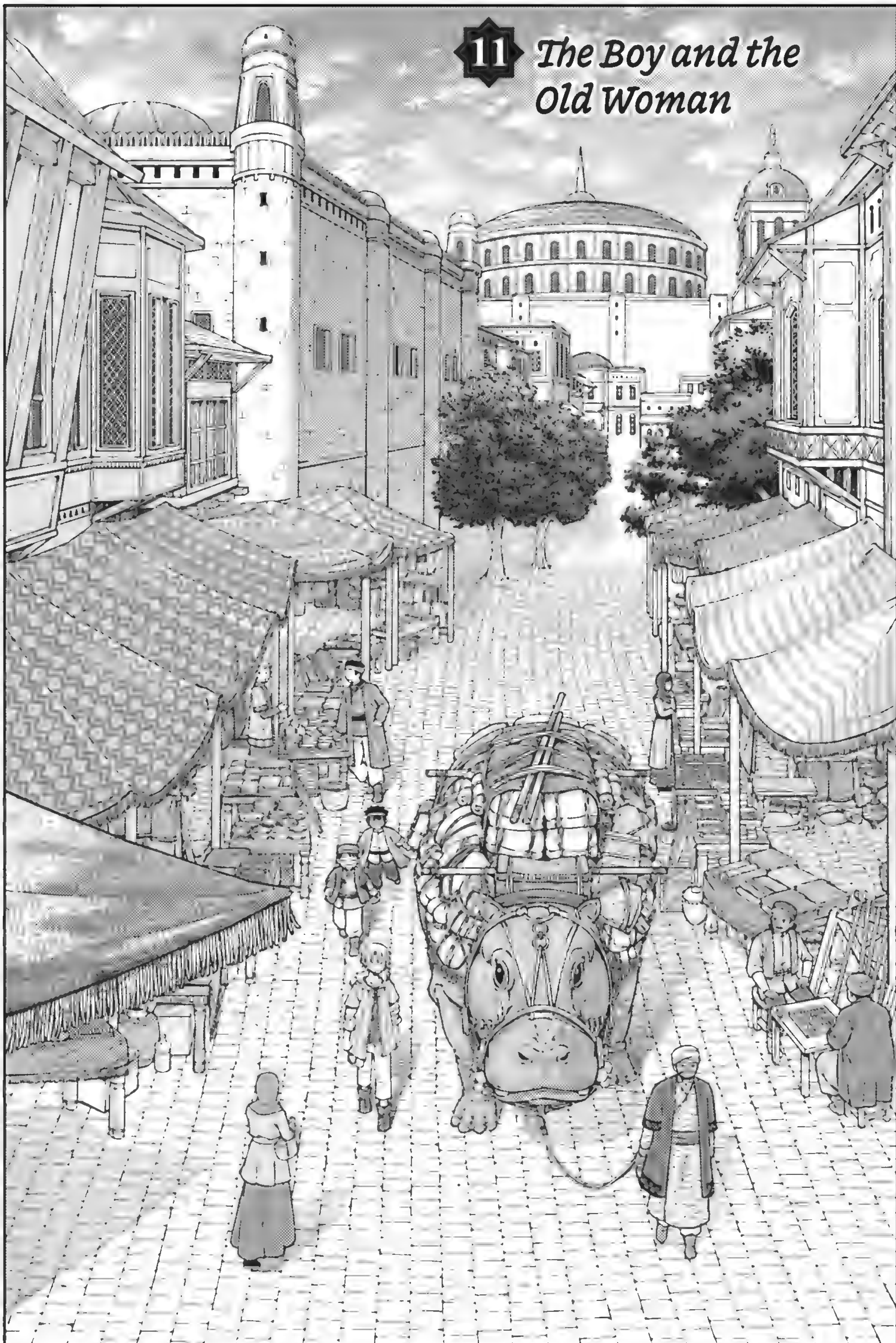






11

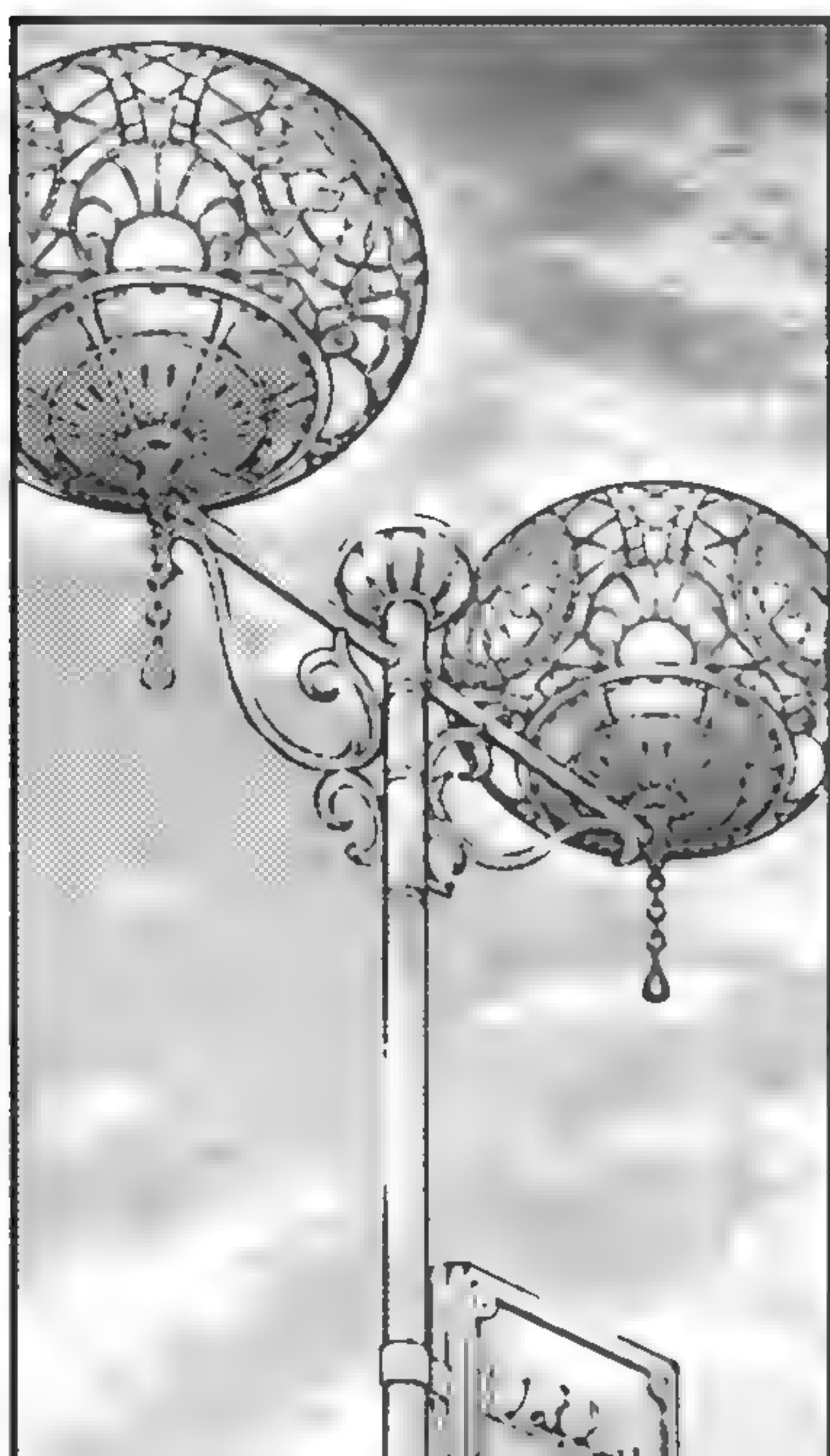
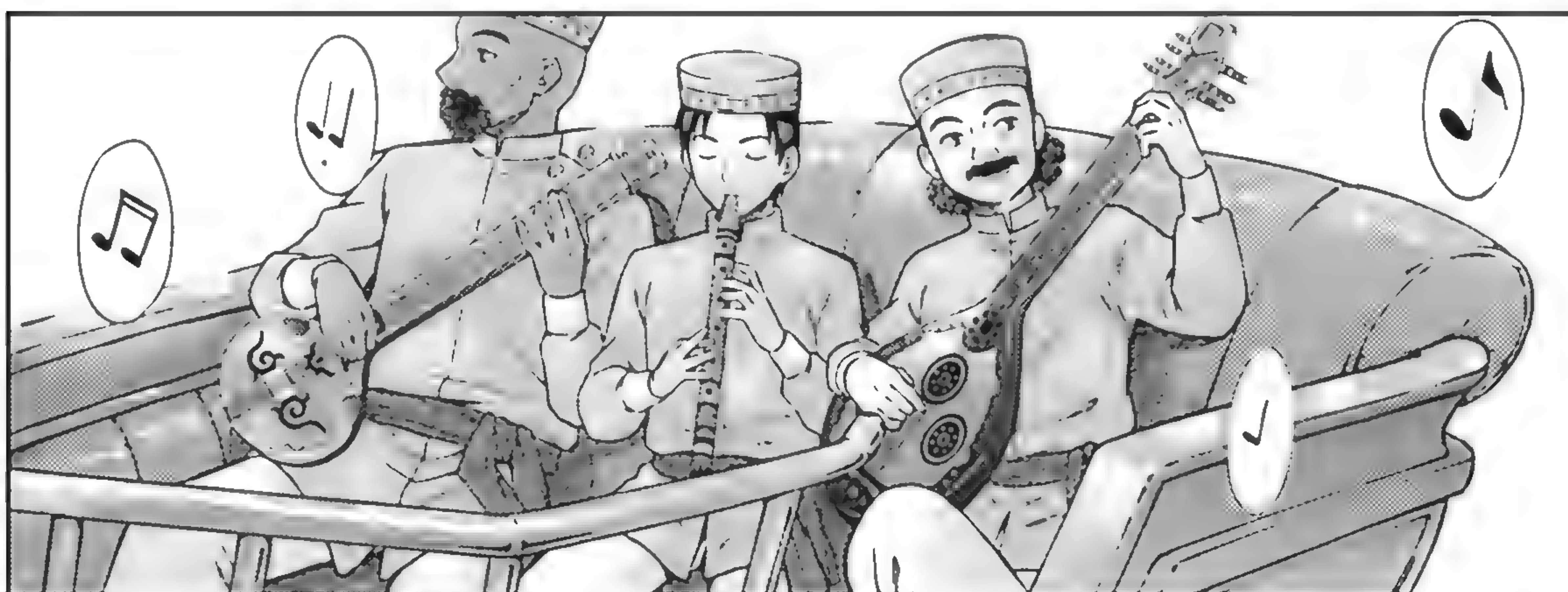
## *The Boy and the Old Woman*















...AND  
KOKOPAH,  
TOO!



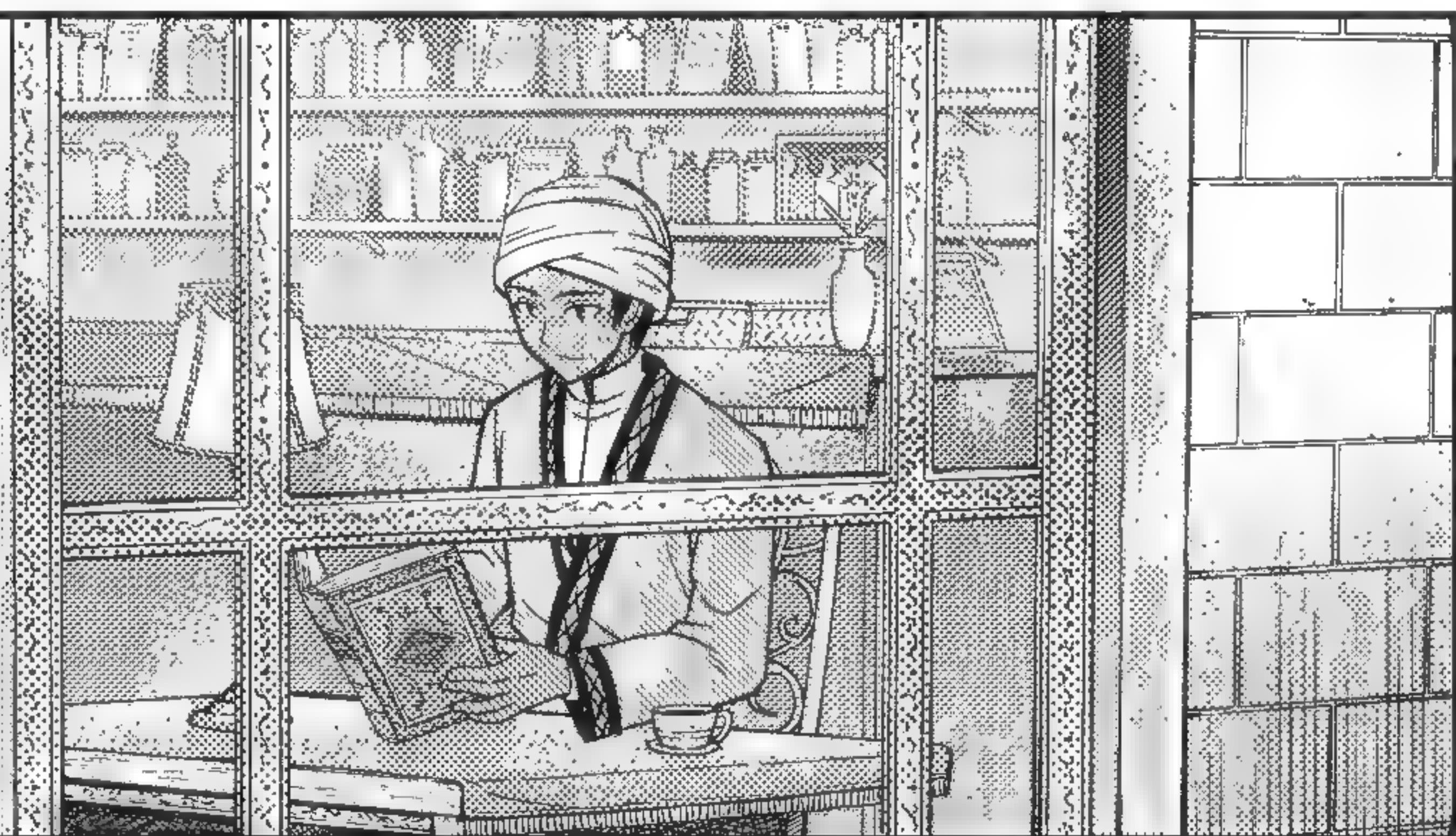
...AND  
KADOE...



...AND  
CREYAK...



I SEE  
RAKTA...



THIS MUST BE  
HOW PEOPLE  
ENJOY THEM-  
SELVES IN  
THE CITY...

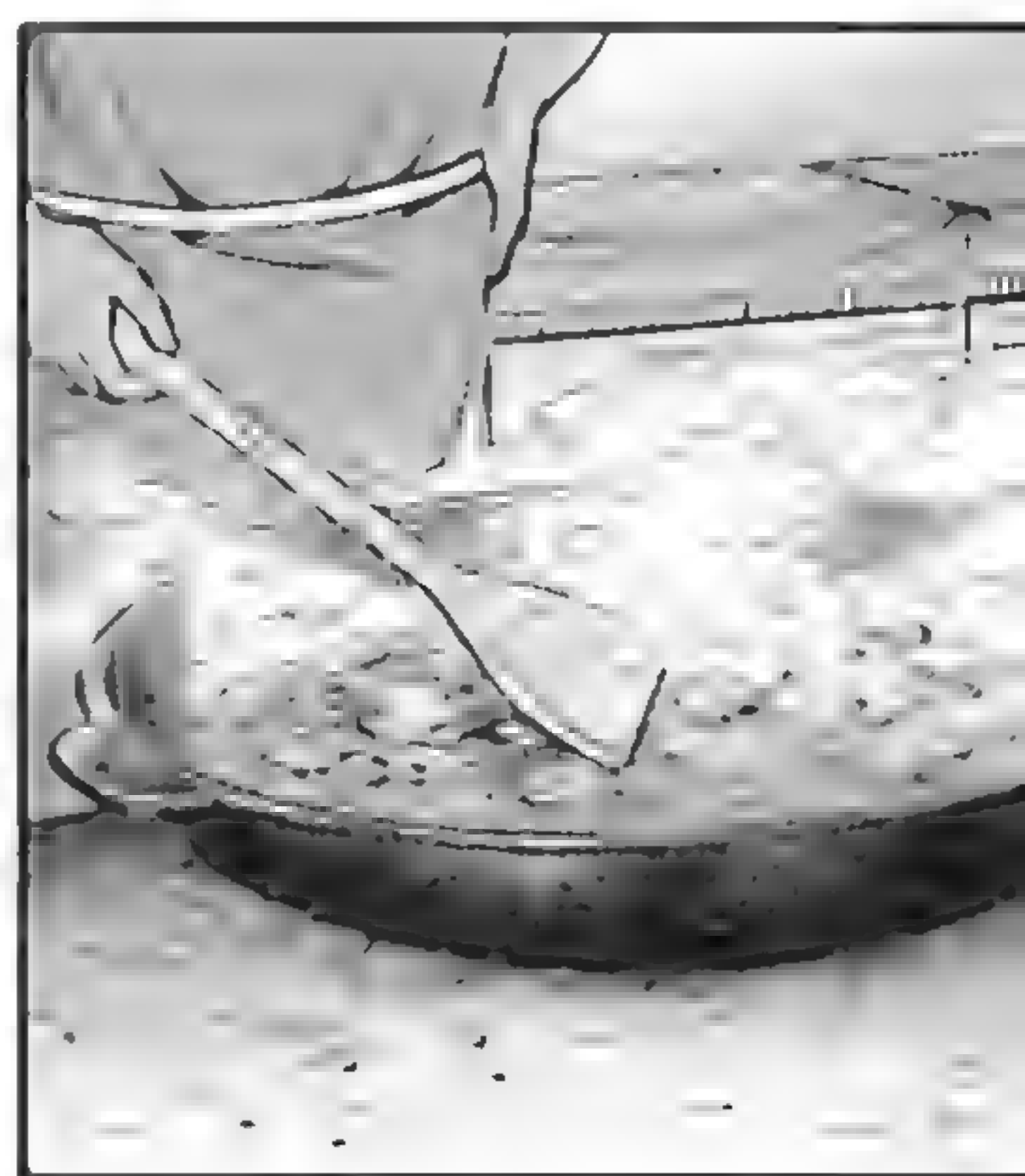
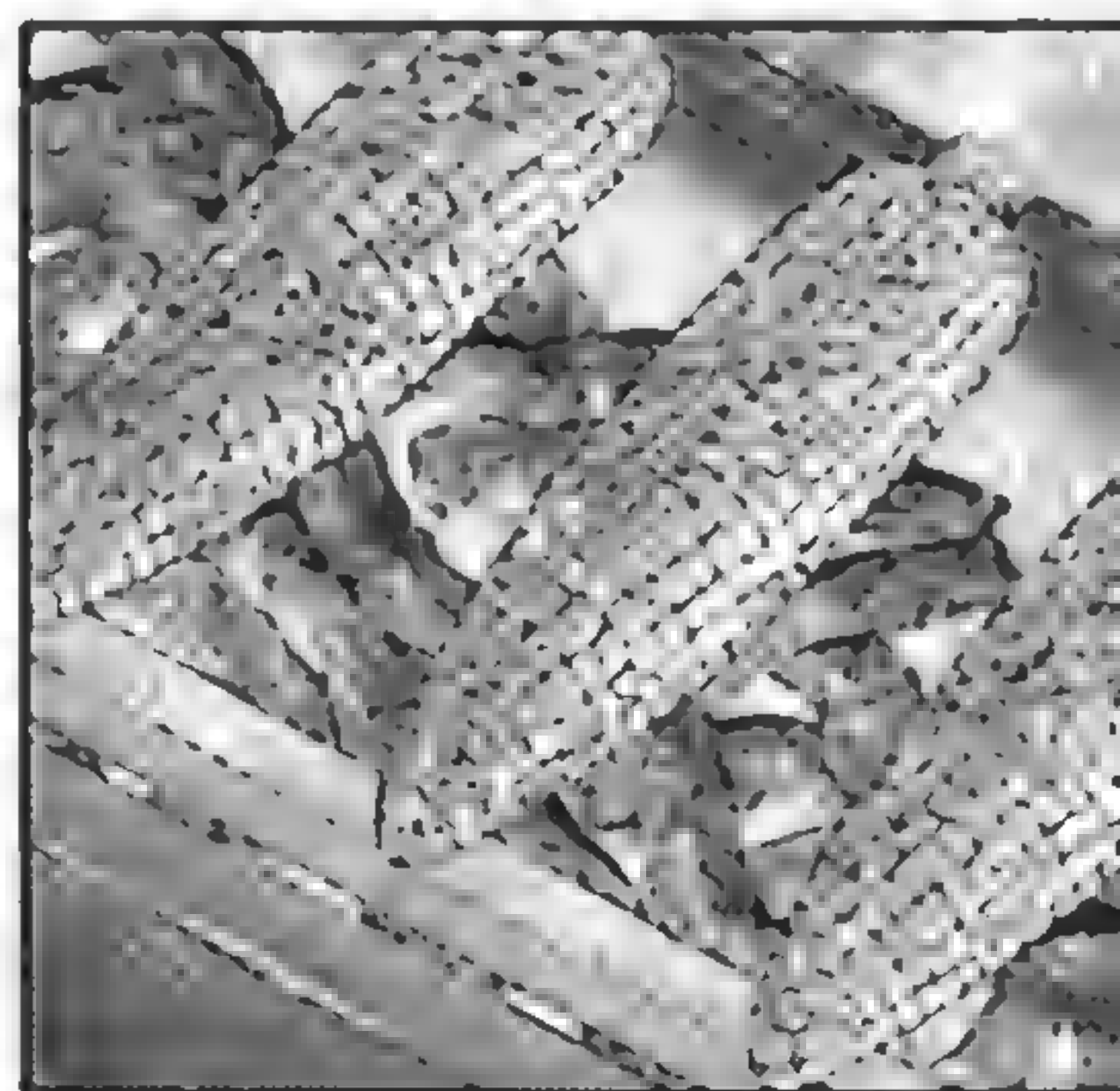
THAT MAN'S  
SITTING  
WITH A  
BOOK AND  
A CUP OF  
TEA.



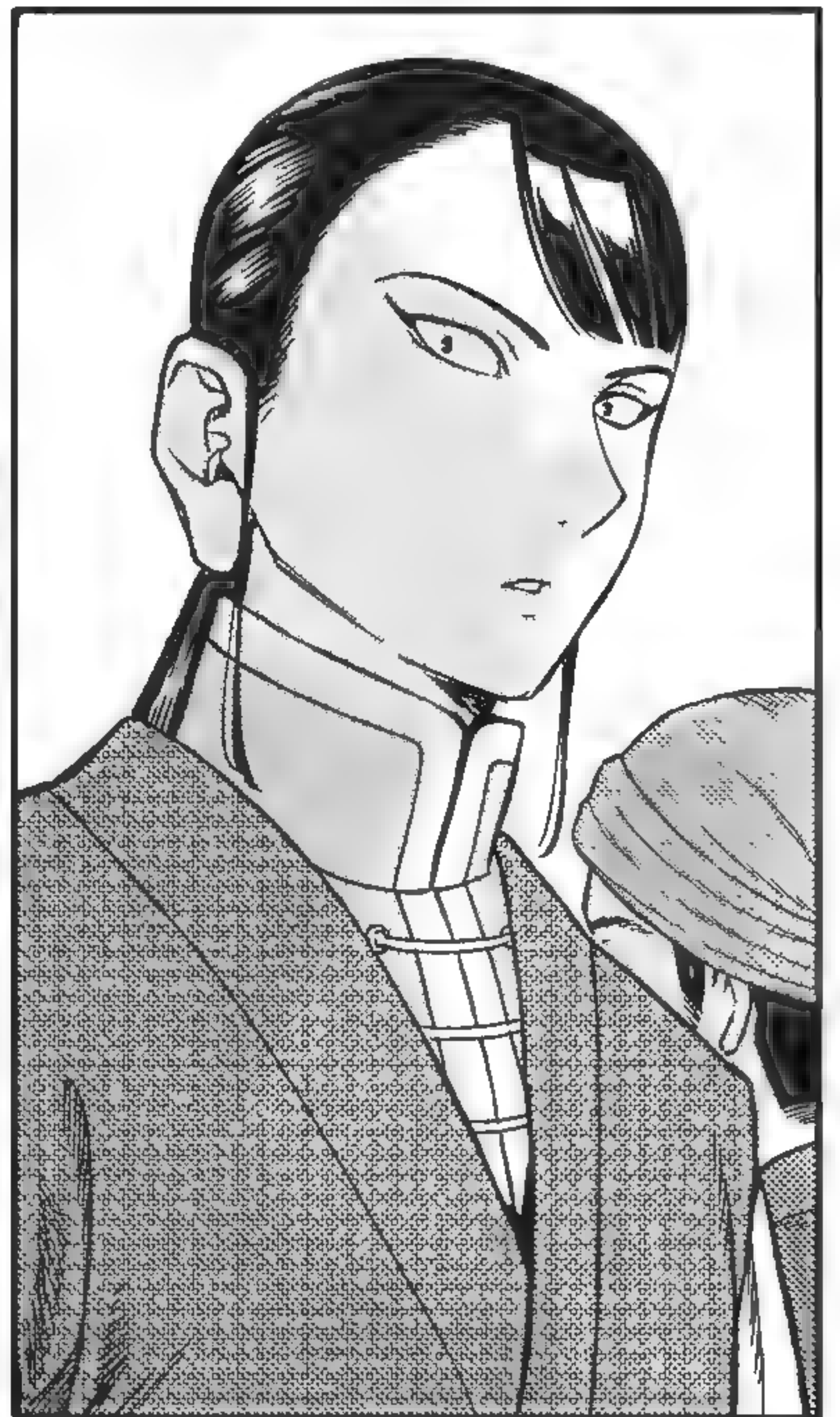
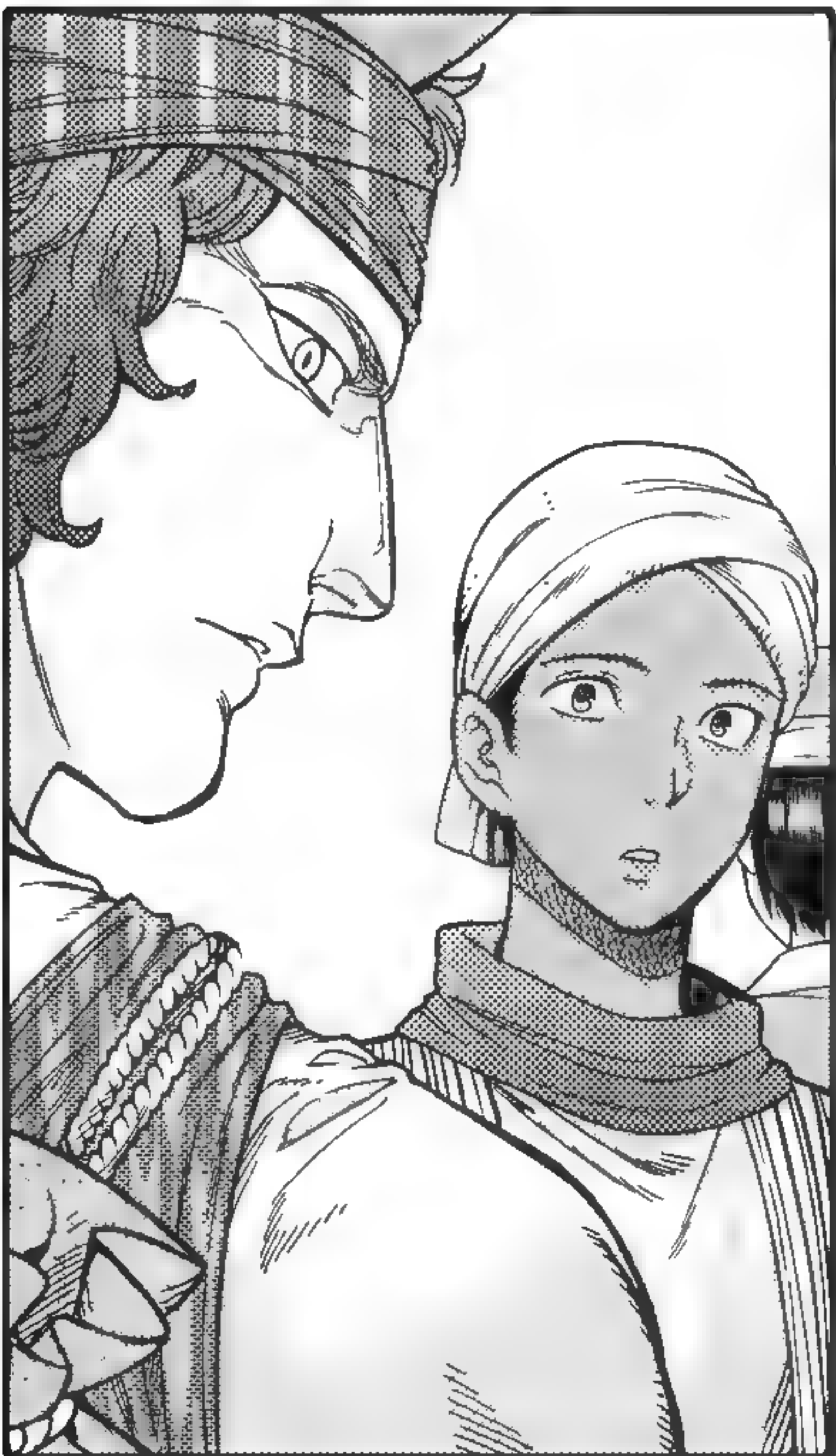
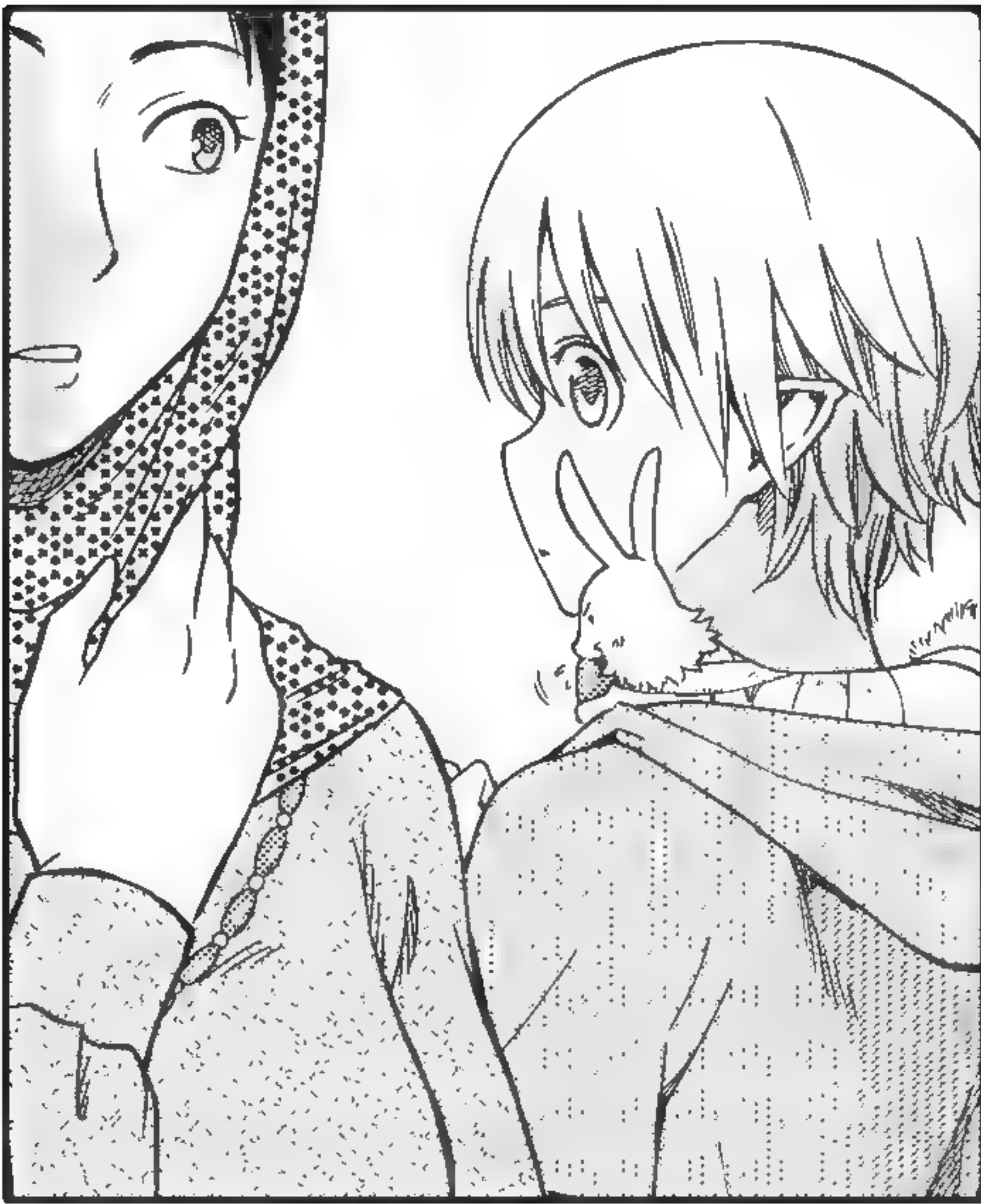
I GUESS  
MAYBE  
THAT'S A  
SPIRIT.

I...

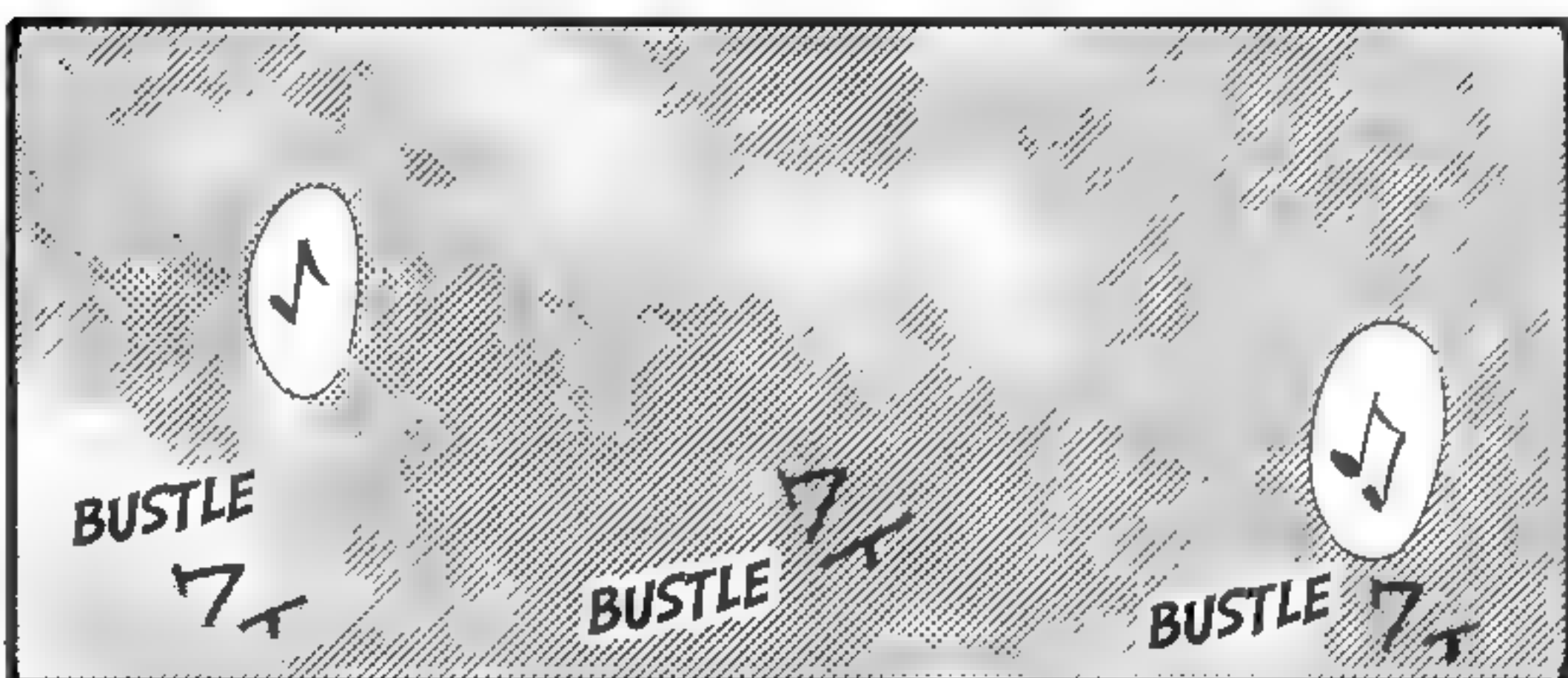
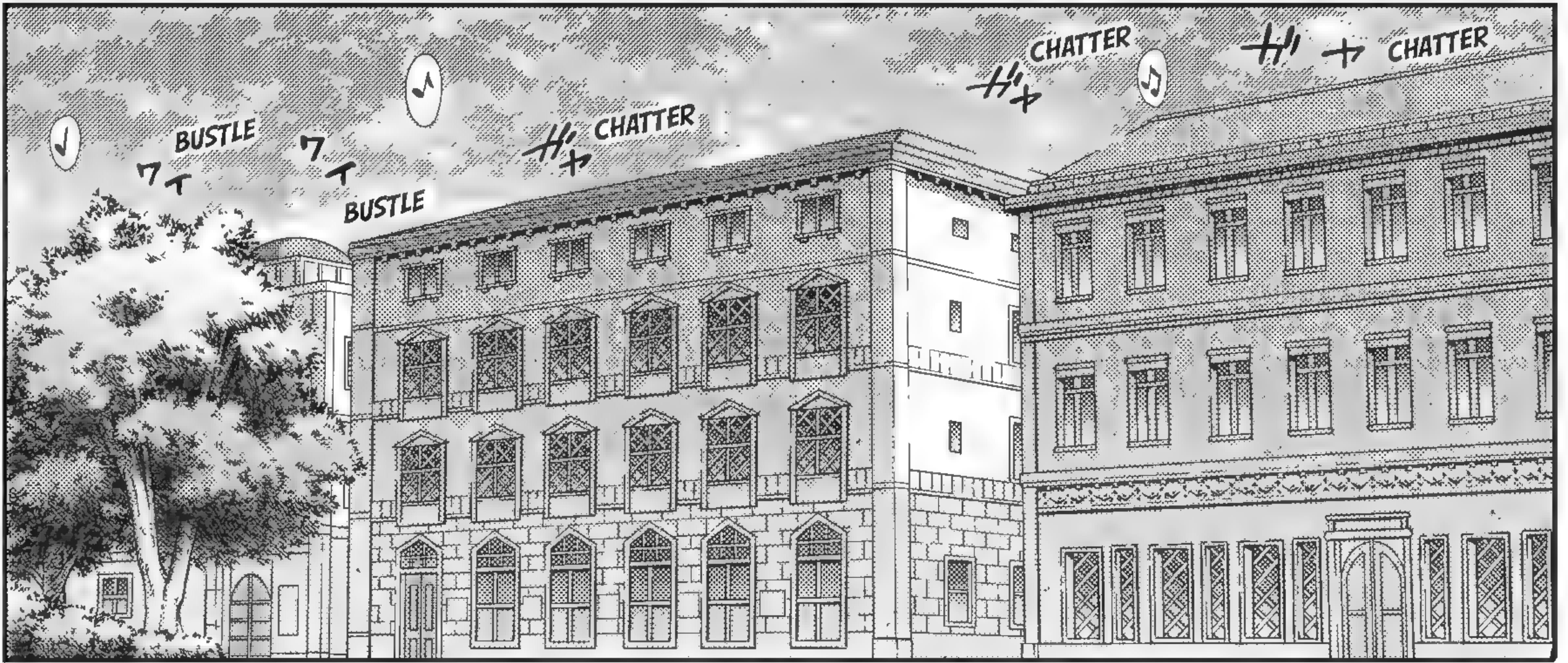
















BUT IF  
ANYTHING,  
IT WAS THE  
OPPOSITE.



WHEN  
I WAS  
LITTLE...



MOST  
PEOPLE  
PROBABLY  
DIDN'T EVEN  
REALIZE I  
HAVE MIXED  
BLOOD.

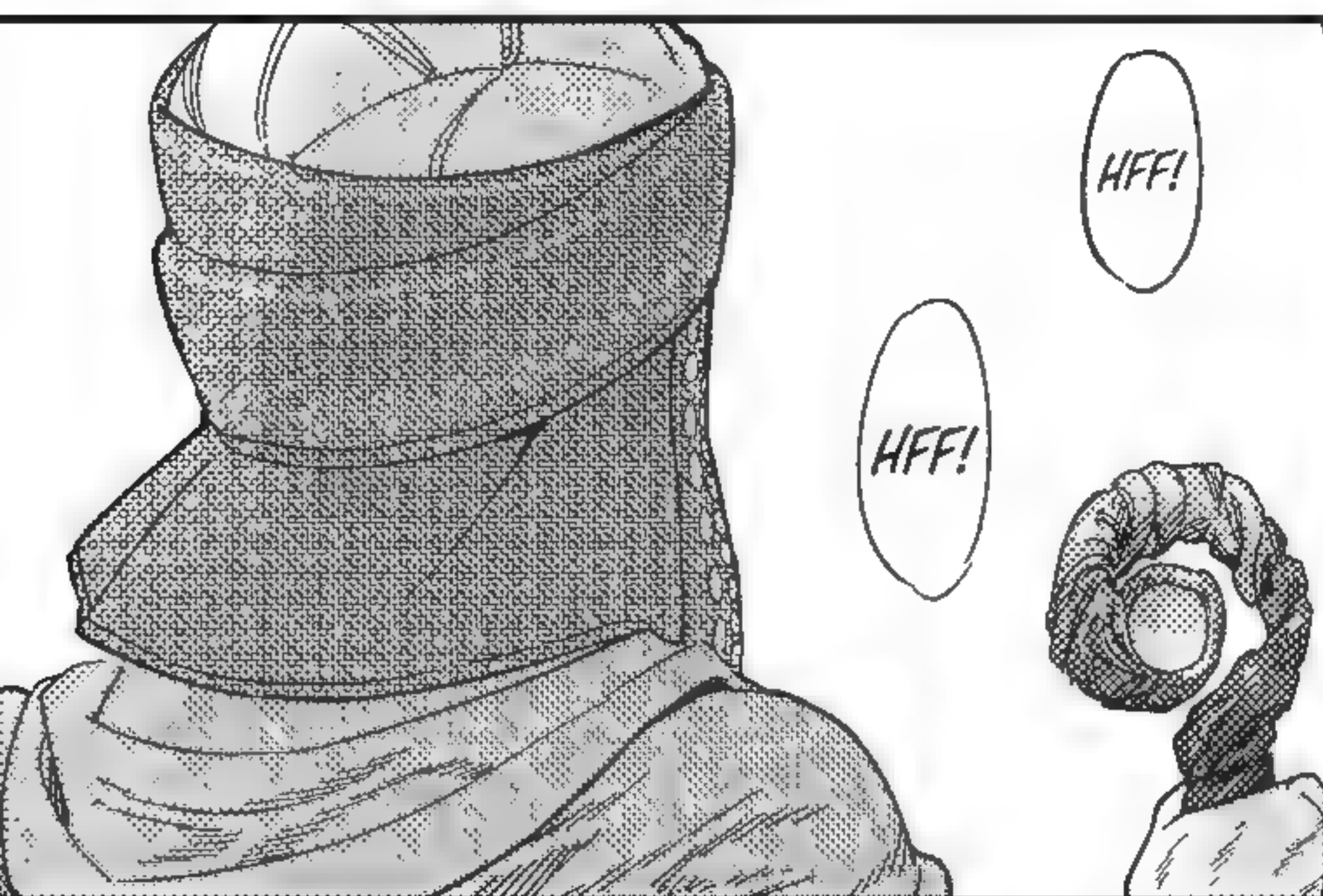
WHEN I WAS  
TRAVELING,  
I WAS JUST  
ANOTHER  
FOREIGNER.

...I USED TO  
THINK THAT IF  
I MADE IT TO  
AFTZAAK, NO  
ONE WOULD  
CARE THAT  
I LOOKED  
DIFFERENT.



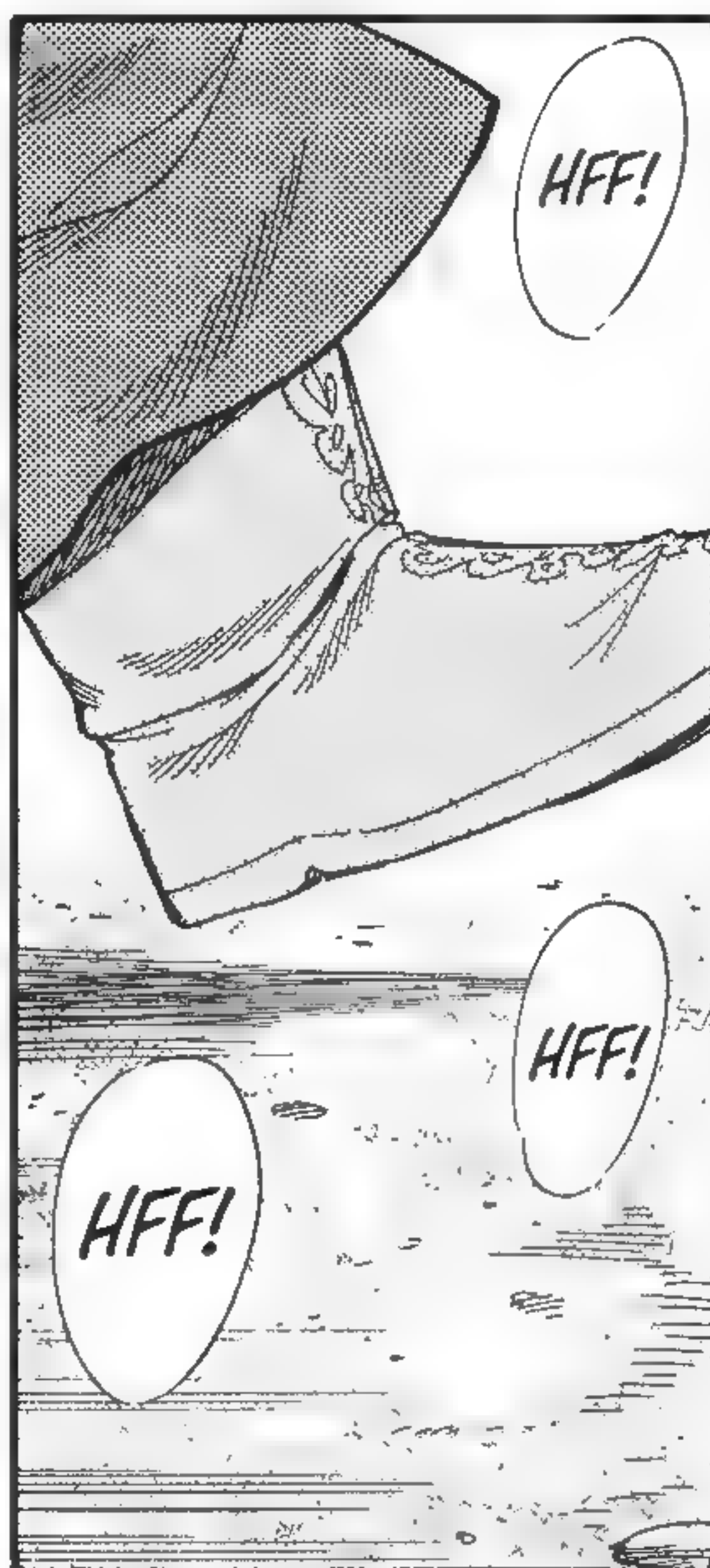
...I SEEM TO  
STICK OUT  
AS SOMEONE  
PARTICULARLY  
UNUSUAL.

BUT HERE,  
AMONG PEOPLE  
FAMILIAR WITH  
THE OTHER  
RACES...



HFF!

HFF!



HFF!

HFF!

HFF!



TMP

TMP

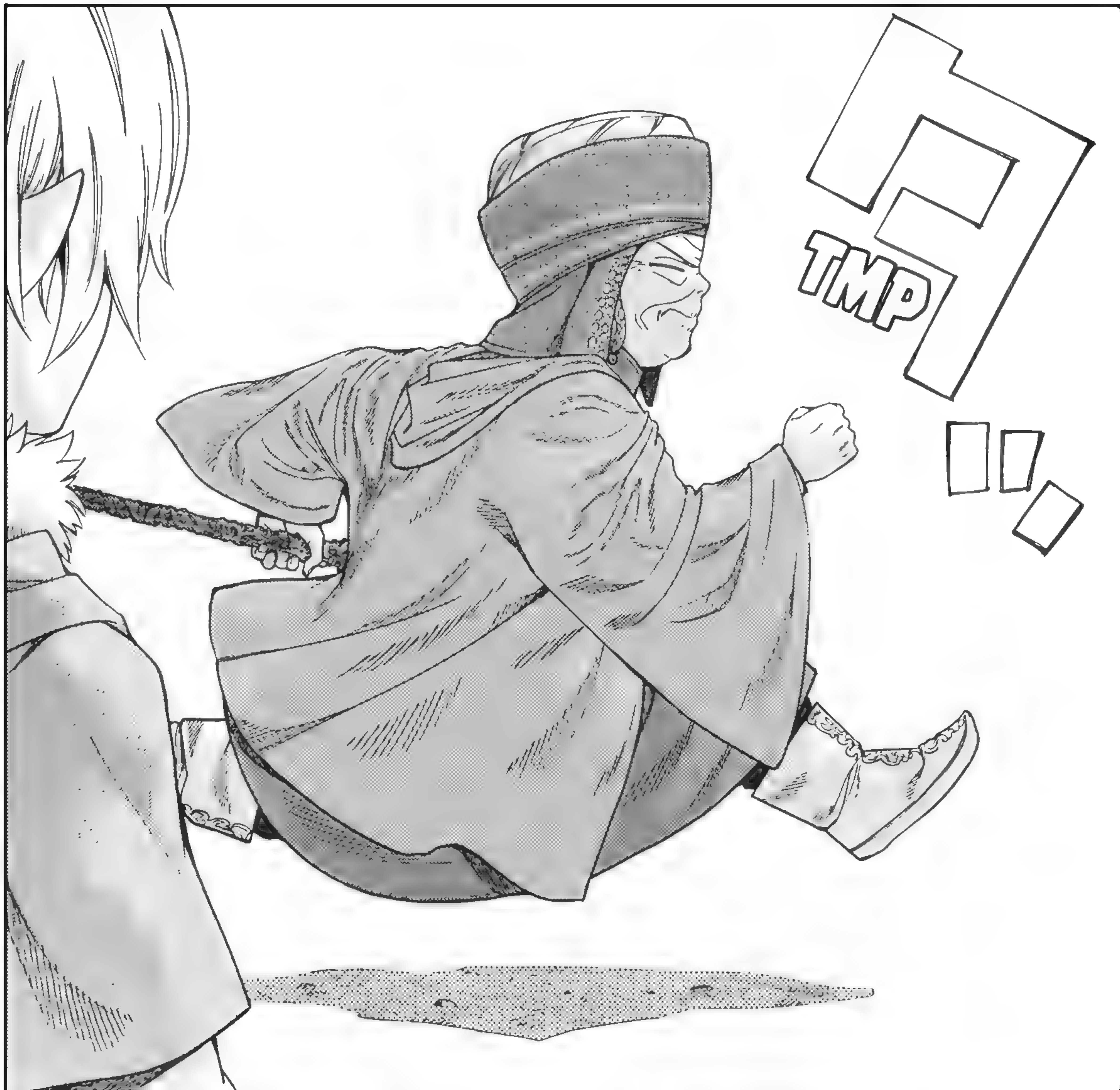
TMP



AND  
THERE'S  
ONLY ONE  
REASON  
THEY'D  
THINK SO.

IT'S  
BECAUSE  
OF WHICH  
BLOODS  
ARE MIXED  
IN ME.









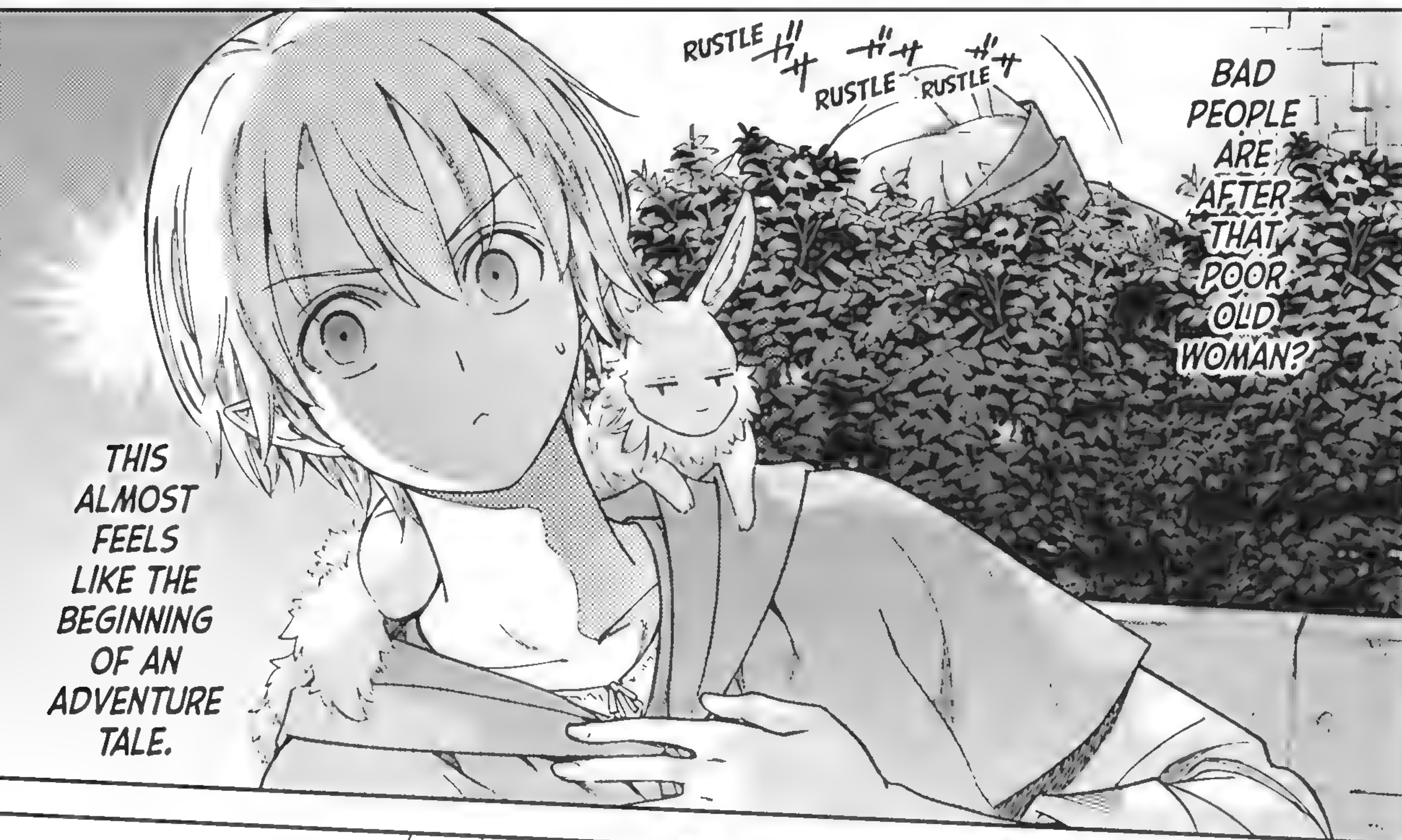
I'LL HIDE  
IN THE  
BUSHES.  
SPIN A  
TALE  
ABOUT  
HOW  
I RAN  
PAST!

I'M BEING  
CHASED BY  
FIENDS!



ME?!

YOU  
THERE,  
LAD! IM-  
PECCABLE  
TIMING!



THIS  
ALMOST  
FEELS  
LIKE THE  
BEGINNING  
OF AN  
ADVENTURE  
TALE.

RUSTLE  
RUSTLE  
RUSTLE

BAD  
PEOPLE  
ARE  
AFTER  
THAT  
POOR  
OLD  
WOMAN?



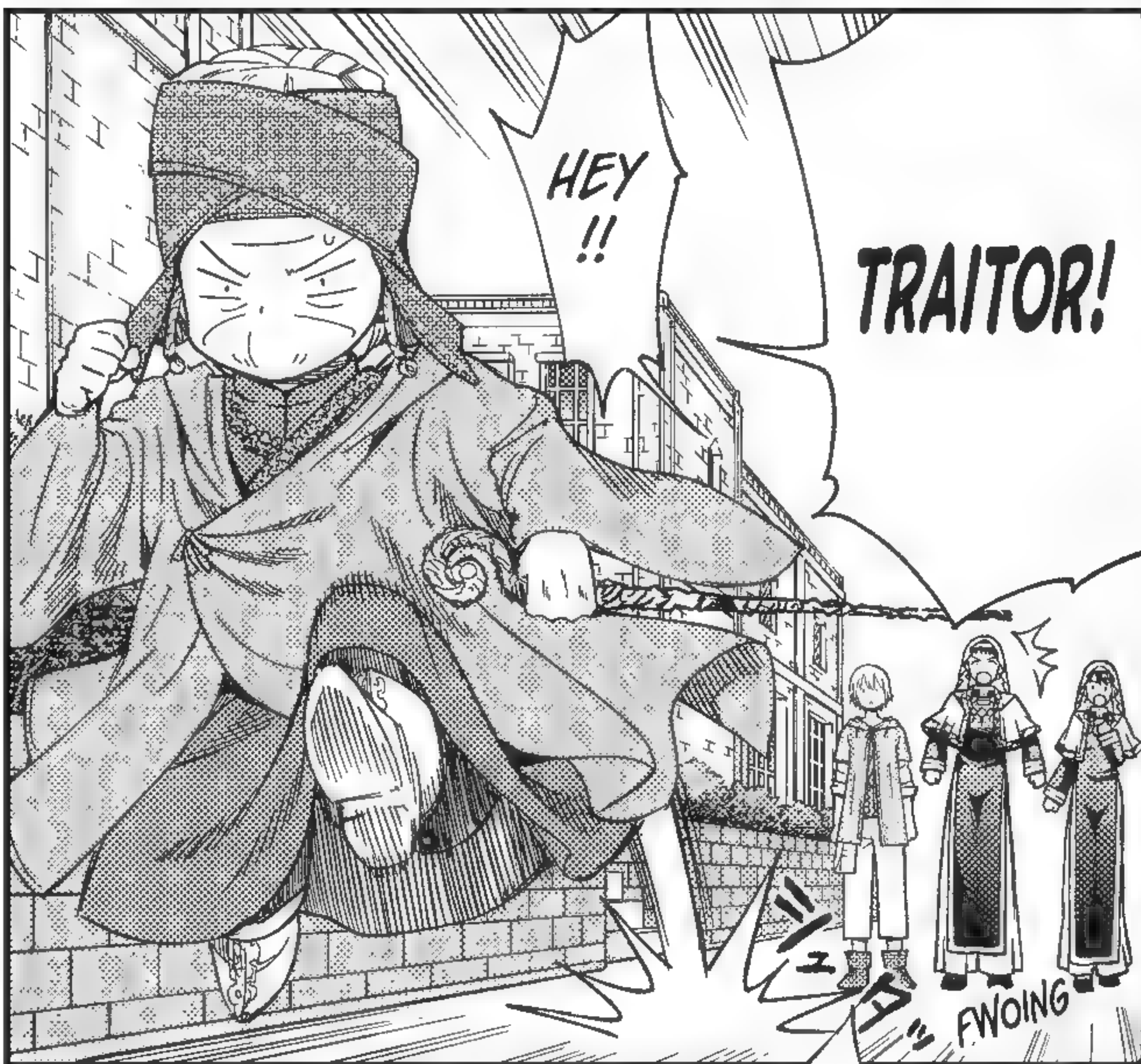
YOU  
THERE!

I HAVE  
TO KEEP  
HER  
SAFE!





YOU DIDN'T  
HAPPEN TO SEE  
A DEATHLY PALE  
OLD WOMAN,  
DID YOU?



HEY  
!!

TRAITOR!

FWOING



HOW  
COULD  
YOU  
?!!!  
OOO

SHE'S  
HIDING  
BACK  
THERE.

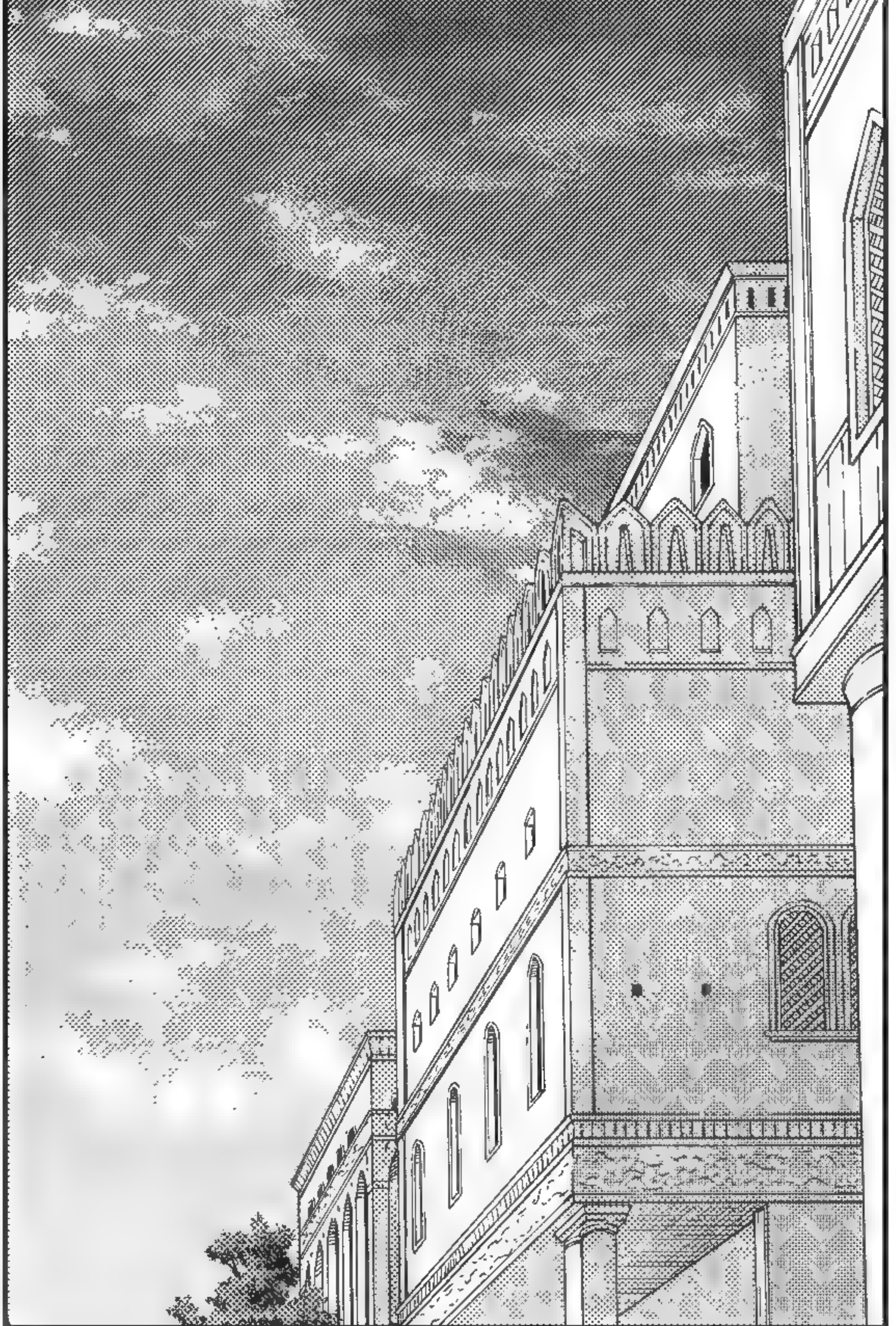


GET  
BACK  
HERE!

SORRY,  
MA'AM...

...BUT THE  
KAFNA ARE  
PROBABLY  
THE ONES  
IN THE  
RIGHT.













AIN'T LIKE  
COUNTRY  
FOLK HAVE  
MUCH TO DO  
WHEN THEY  
VISIT THE  
CITY.

YOU CAN  
JOIN ME ON  
MY WALK.



...BUT  
I'D STILL  
APPRECIATE  
SOME  
COMMON  
COURTESY.

I THINK  
IT'S  
IMPORTANT  
TO LISTEN  
TO MY  
ELDERS...



"...OR  
DISTANT  
IN AGE."

AS  
SPOKEN  
BY KEN  
KHLOE!

"BE THOU  
ALWAYS  
POLITE, NO  
MATTER HOW  
CLOSE IN  
HEART..."



OF  
COURSE!

*I'd  
love  
to!*

AHEM! YOUNG  
MAN, WOULD YOU  
BE SO KIND AS TO  
JOIN THIS POOR  
OLD WOMAN ON  
HER EVENING  
STROLL, THE ONLY  
PLEASURE OF HER  
WEARY LIFE?

OH, SO  
NOW  
YOU'LL  
COME!



GRK  
...

WHO DO  
YOU THINK  
YOU ARE,  
QUOTING  
WORDS OF  
THE WISE  
TO ME?









SO?  
HOW'D  
YOU  
DO?

FAILED  
MISERABLY.

I COULDN'T  
FINISH ALL  
OF THE  
WRITTEN  
QUESTIONS  
OR THE  
PRACTICAL  
TEST.

AND FOR  
SOME REASON,  
DURING THE  
INTERVIEW  
I STARTED  
CRYING...

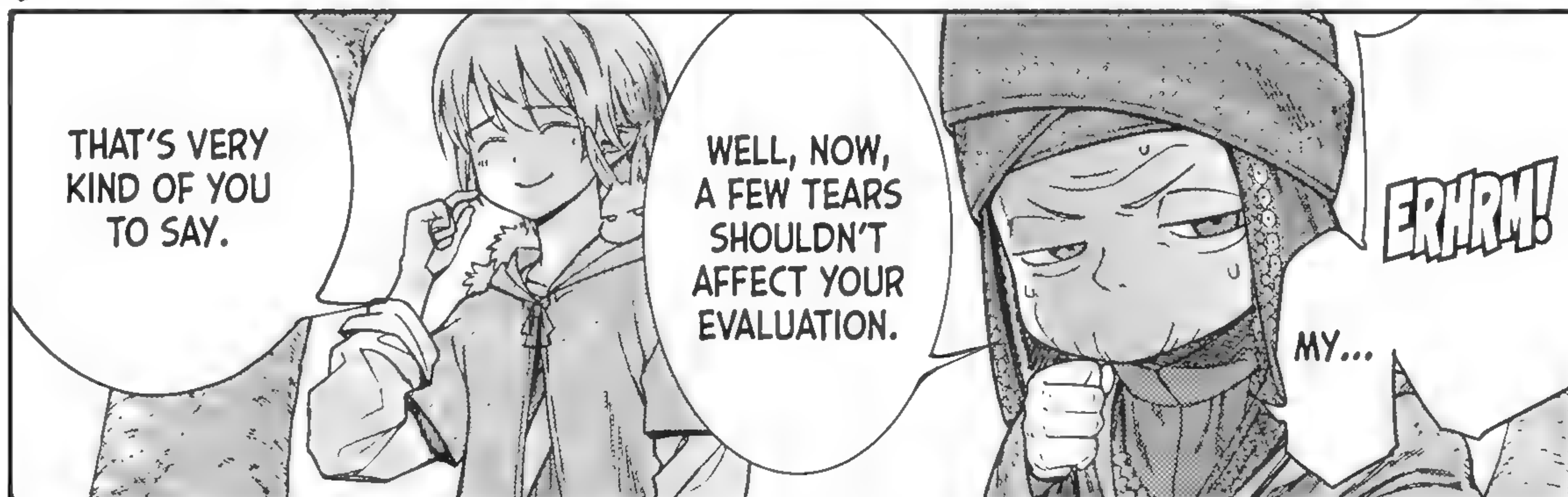
IS IT  
THAT  
EASY TO  
TELL?

IT'S  
WRITTEN  
ALL OVER  
YOU LIKE  
FRUIT IN AN  
ORCHARD.

I FANCY A LAD  
LIKE YOU MUST  
BE HERE IN THE  
CITY TO TAKE  
THE KAFNA  
EXAM, HM?

AHEM!

...



THAT'S VERY  
KIND OF YOU  
TO SAY.

WELL, NOW,  
A FEW TEARS  
SHOULDN'T  
AFFECT YOUR  
EVALUATION.

ERHRM!

MY...



YOU'VE  
GOT A  
DREAM...

...OF  
BECOMING  
A KAFNA,  
DON'T  
YOU?

WELL,  
YOU'LL TRY  
AGAIN,  
YES?

BUT IT  
TAUGHT ME  
JUST HOW  
AMAZING THE  
KAFNA ARE.  
THEY ALL  
MANAGED  
THAT  
EXAM.

AT ANY  
RATE, I  
DIDN'T  
MAKE  
IT.





...I'M STARTING TO GET THE FEELING THAT "DREAM" ISN'T THE RIGHT WORD FOR IT.

I'M NOT SURE IF I'LL TRY AGAIN.

IT'S QUITE A LOT OF MONEY FOR ME, AND...



...YOU CAME ALL THE WAY HERE TO TAKE IT, DIDN'T YOU?

WELL, ERM...

HOW DID YOU...?



THE DETAILS OF THE JOB COME DOWN TO WHICH OF THE TWELVE OFFICES YOU'RE ASSIGNED TO.

...AS WELL AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE.

BECOMING A KAFNA IS A WAYPOINT ALONG THE ROAD...



I THINK THAT LACK OF VISION REFLECTED IN THE RESULTS OF MY EXAM.

...BUT I HADN'T FORMED ANY CLEAR PICTURE OF WHAT KIND OF JOB I MIGHT DO, OR HOW I'D CONTRIBUTE TO THE LIBRARY AND ITS TEXTS.

I'VE KNOWN THAT I WANT TO WORK WITH BOOKS...



...AND WHAT I CAN DO FOR THE BOOKS I SO DEARLY LOVE.

TO DECIDE WHO I WANT TO BECOME...

...THAT I'D LIKE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO THINK THINGS THROUGH MORE CAREFULLY.

IT MADE ME REALIZE...





IT'S A  
DREAM,  
CHILD. SAY IT  
STRAIGHT.

No need to  
dither and  
faff.

WHY  
ARE YOU  
MAKING  
THAT  
FACE?!



...THEN WHAT  
ABOUT YOU?  
WHAT SORT  
OF DREAM DO  
YOU HAVE?

WELL...



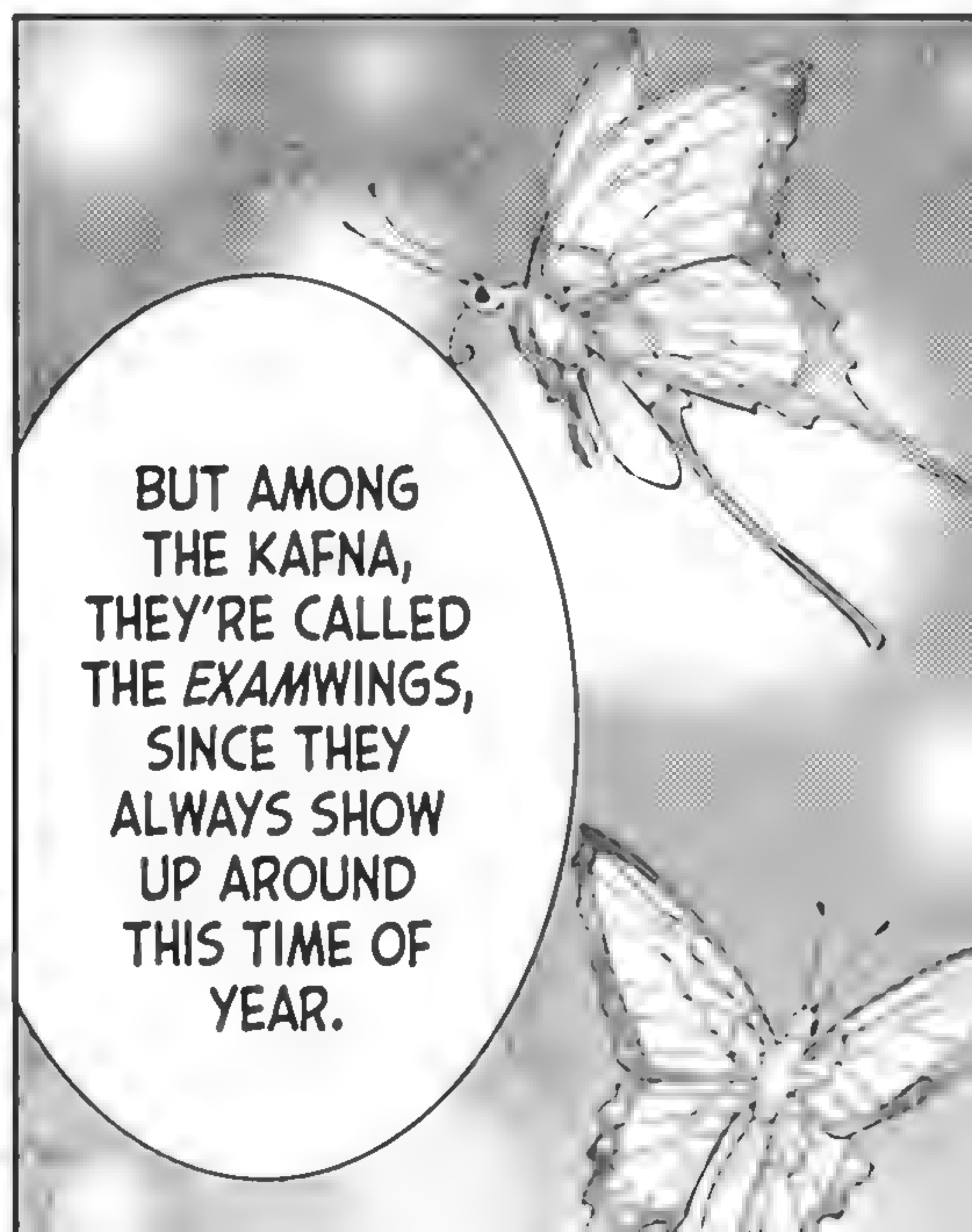
HEY!  
NO  
FAIR!

I AIN'T  
GONNA  
TELL YOU  
THAT!





Park of the Great Magus



BUT AMONG THE KAFNA, THEY'RE CALLED THE *EXAMWINGS*, SINCE THEY ALWAYS SHOW UP AROUND THIS TIME OF YEAR.







*A Few Moments Earlier...*

BOOKY-  
BOOK!

BOOK,  
BOOK!

OF  
COURSE,  
DEAR.

YOU'LL  
TAKE ME  
TO THE  
LIBRARY  
AGAIN,  
RIGHT,  
MOM?

HOORAY!

SKIP  
SKIP

I GOT A  
BOOK!

IT'S  
JUST  
FOR  
ME!

BEAN!

LOOK!  
IT'S A  
CLUCKY-  
CLUCK!

GOODNESS.  
HE MUST  
BE LOST.  
I WONDER  
WHERE HIS  
HOME IS?

!

IF YOU'RE  
GOING TO SKIP,  
LET ME HOLD  
YOUR BOOK FOR  
YOU. I DON'T  
WANT YOU TO  
TRIP.

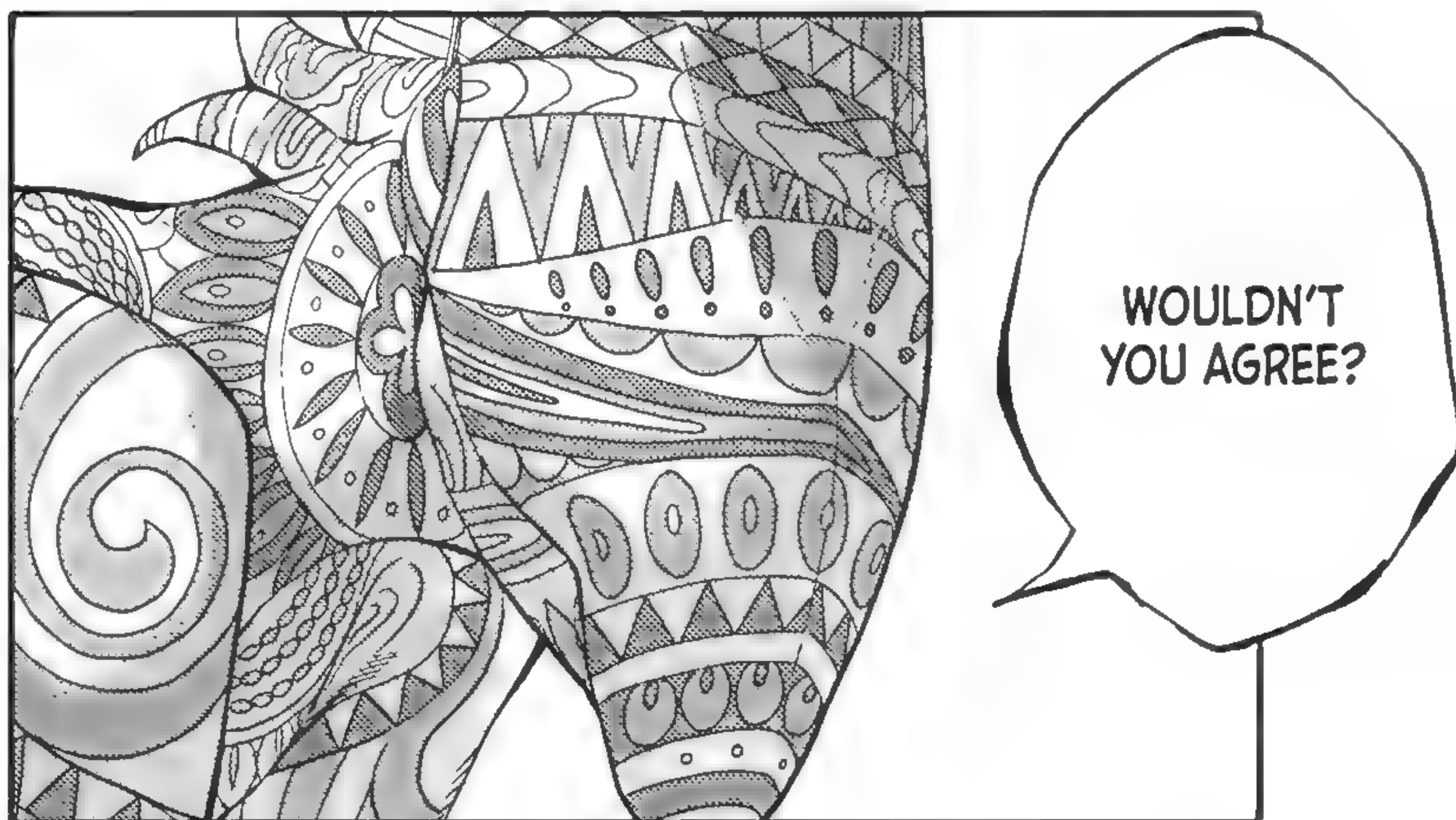
NO!

MY  
BOOK!  
I GET  
TO  
HOLD  
IT!

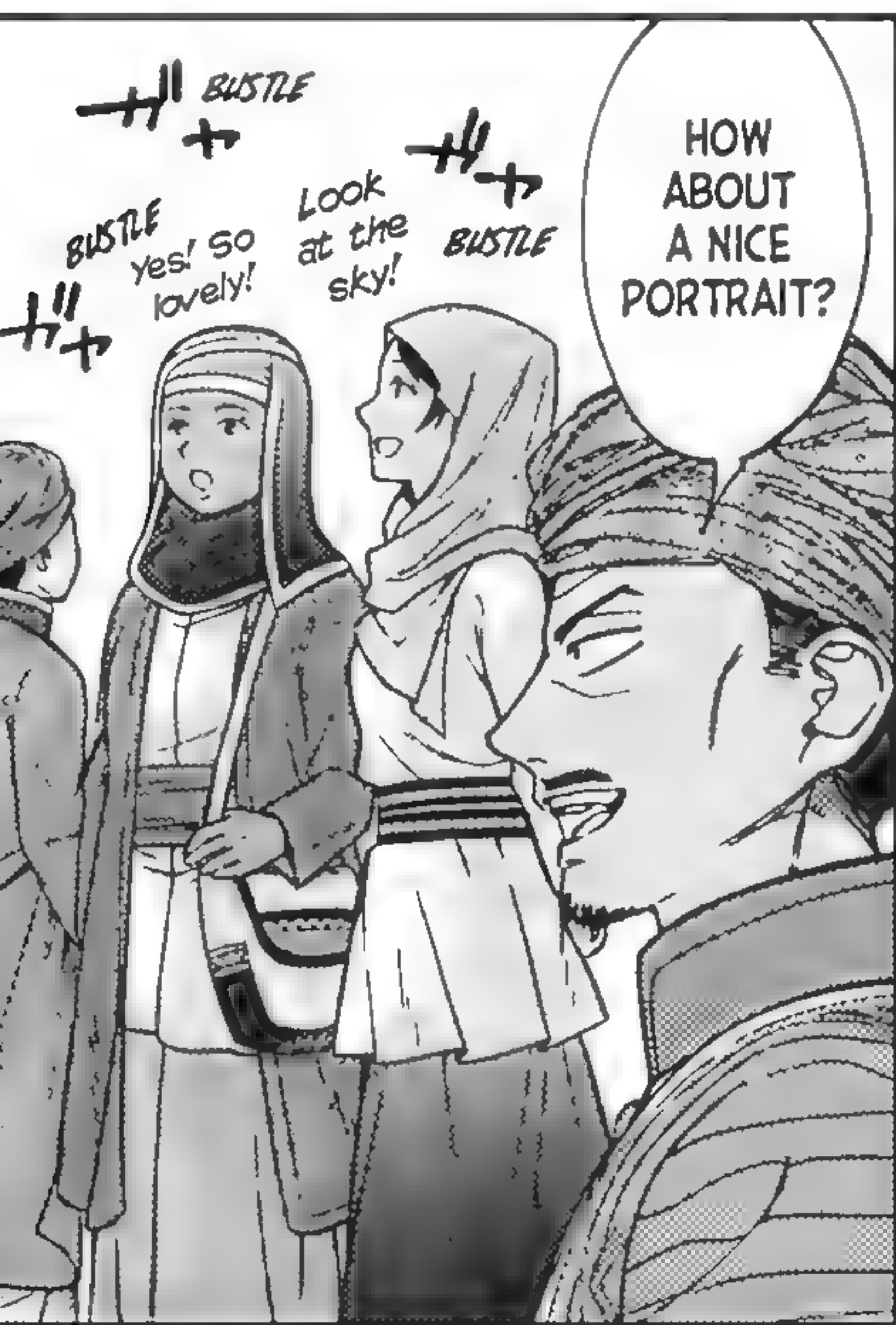




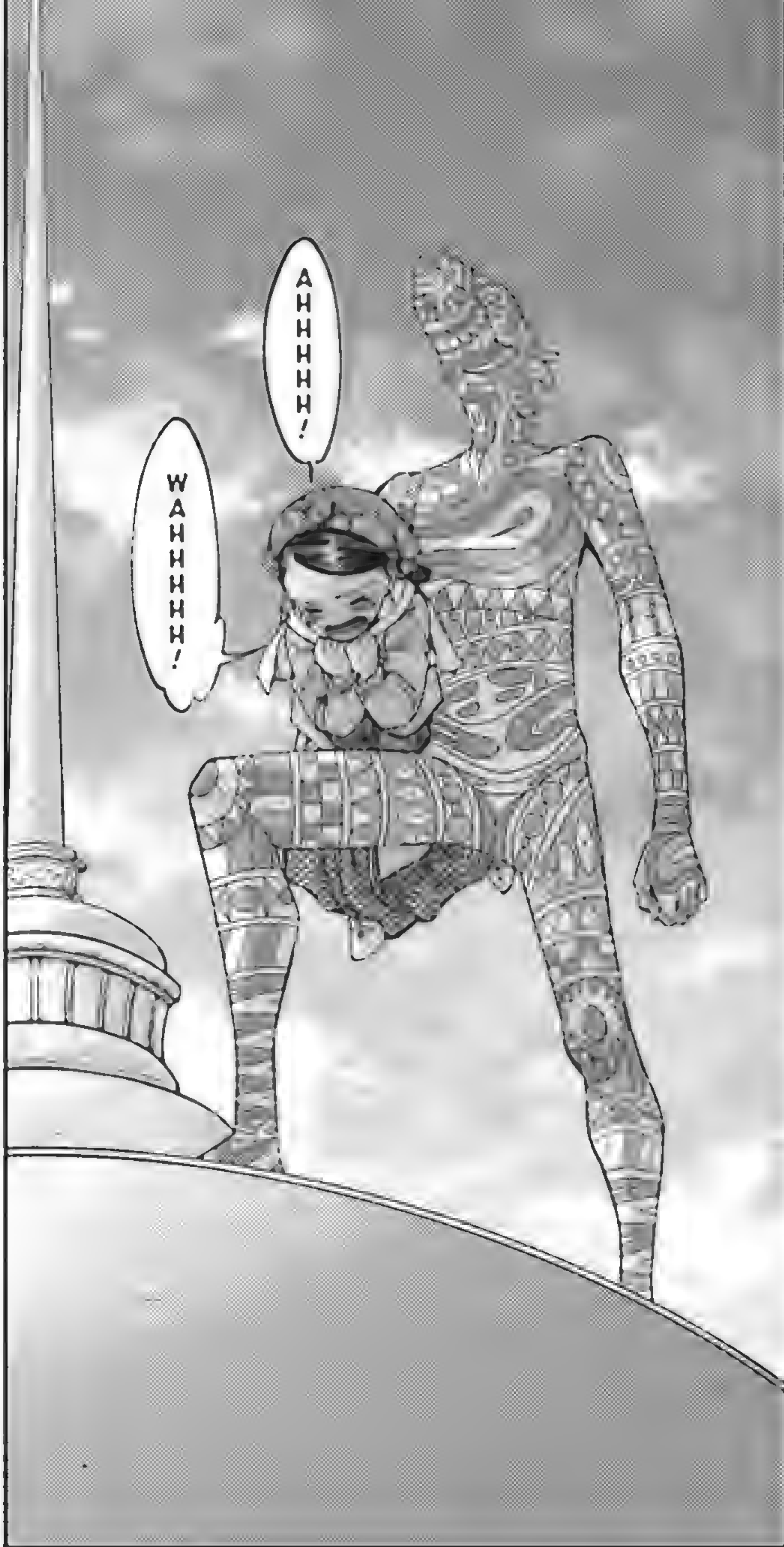
















POOMF

SHHHWWWW  
K  
IL  
IL  
IL  
IL  
IL

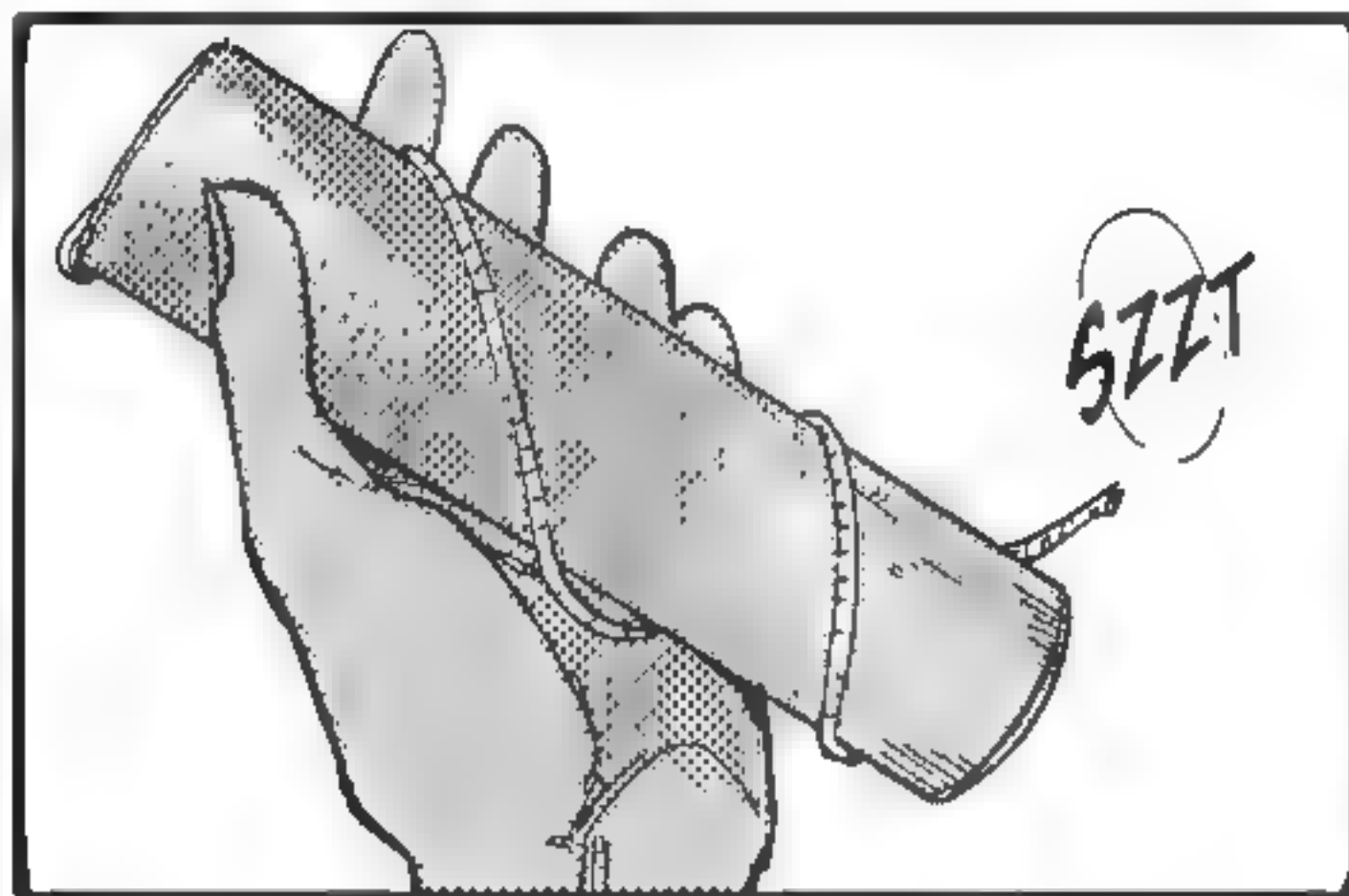


THINK  
T  
N  
K

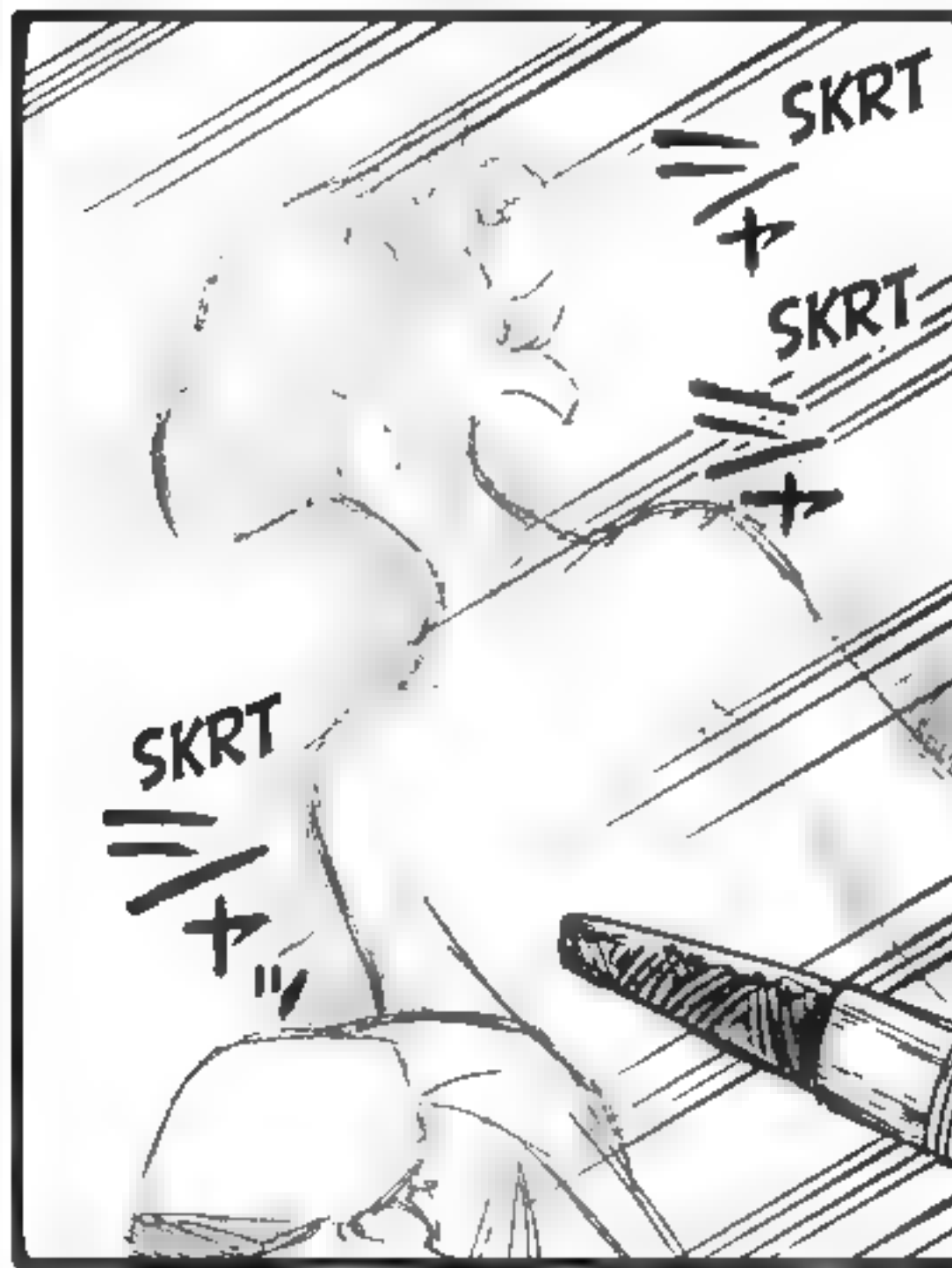


CLATTER

THAT'S  
A  
SYNTH-  
SPIRIT!



SZZT



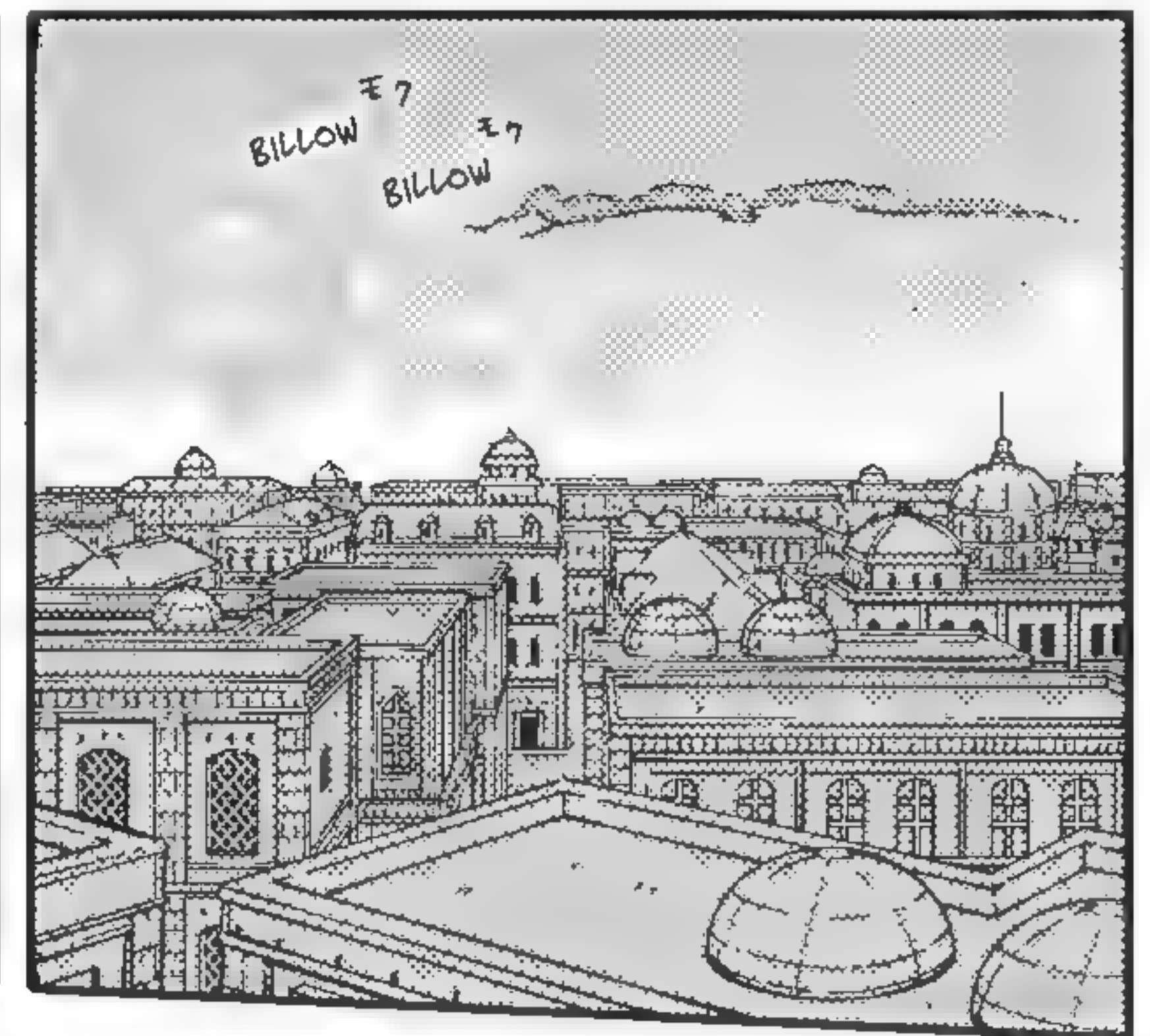
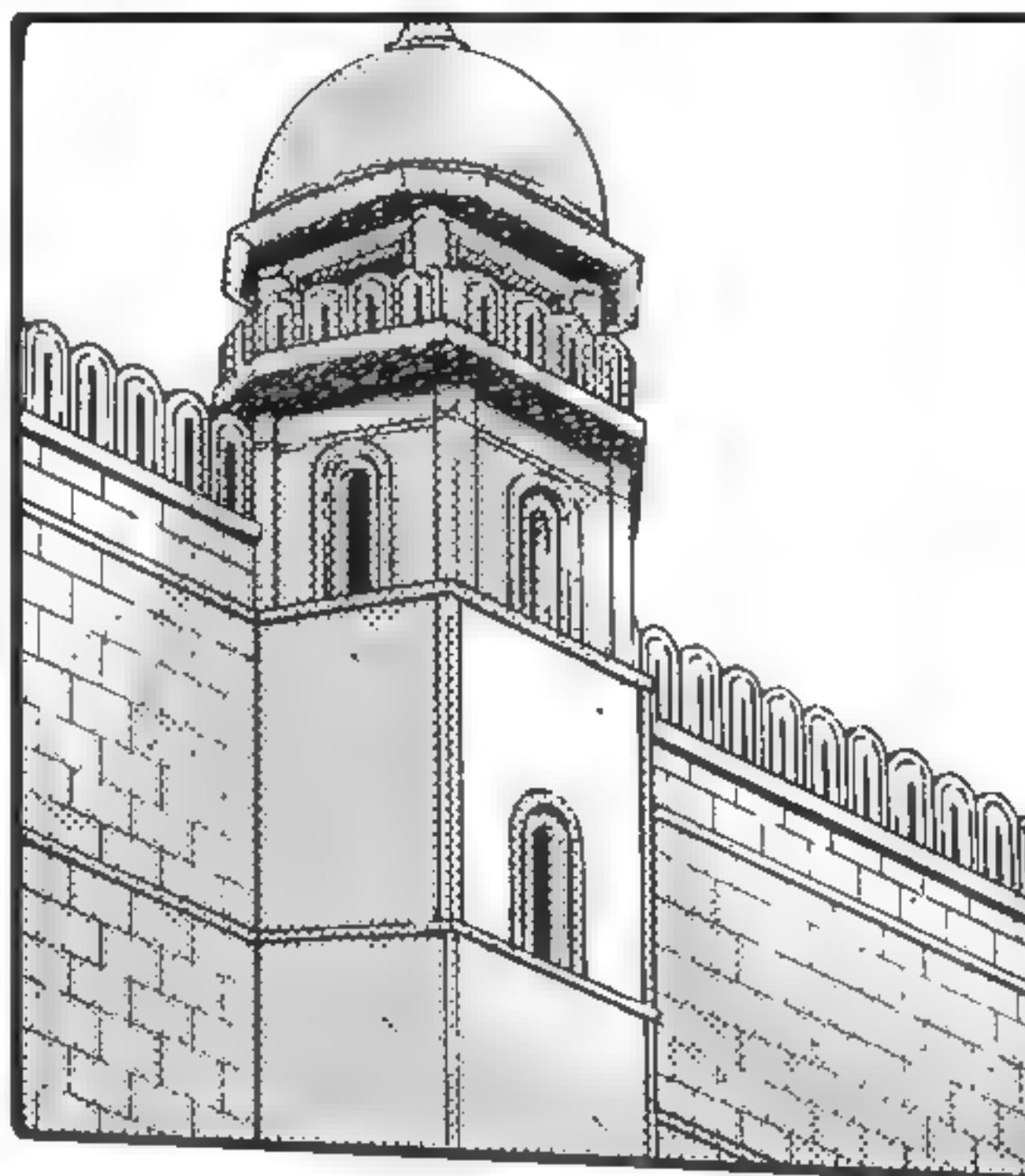
SKRT  
+  
SKRT  
+  
SKRT



PWUMF



ENTER-  
TAINMENT  
DISTRICT  
REQUESTING  
DISPATCH!



BILLOW  
BILLOW

ROGUE  
SPIRIT!



SIGNAL  
BLUE!





WE'VE IDENTIFIED A HOSTILE SPIRIT IN THE DISTRICT COURTYARD.

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR INTRUDERS!

CHANCES ARE, THE SPIRIT'S ONLY A DIVERSION!



GET THE WORD OUT! WARNING SIGNALS TO ALL OFFICES!

THE REST OF YOU, SECURE THE GATES.

SECOND SQUAD, I WANT YOU ON SITE.

CAPTAIN, FIRST SQUAD, CENTRAL LIBRARY PROTECTIONS OFFICE  
HASSAK GAGAVITZ





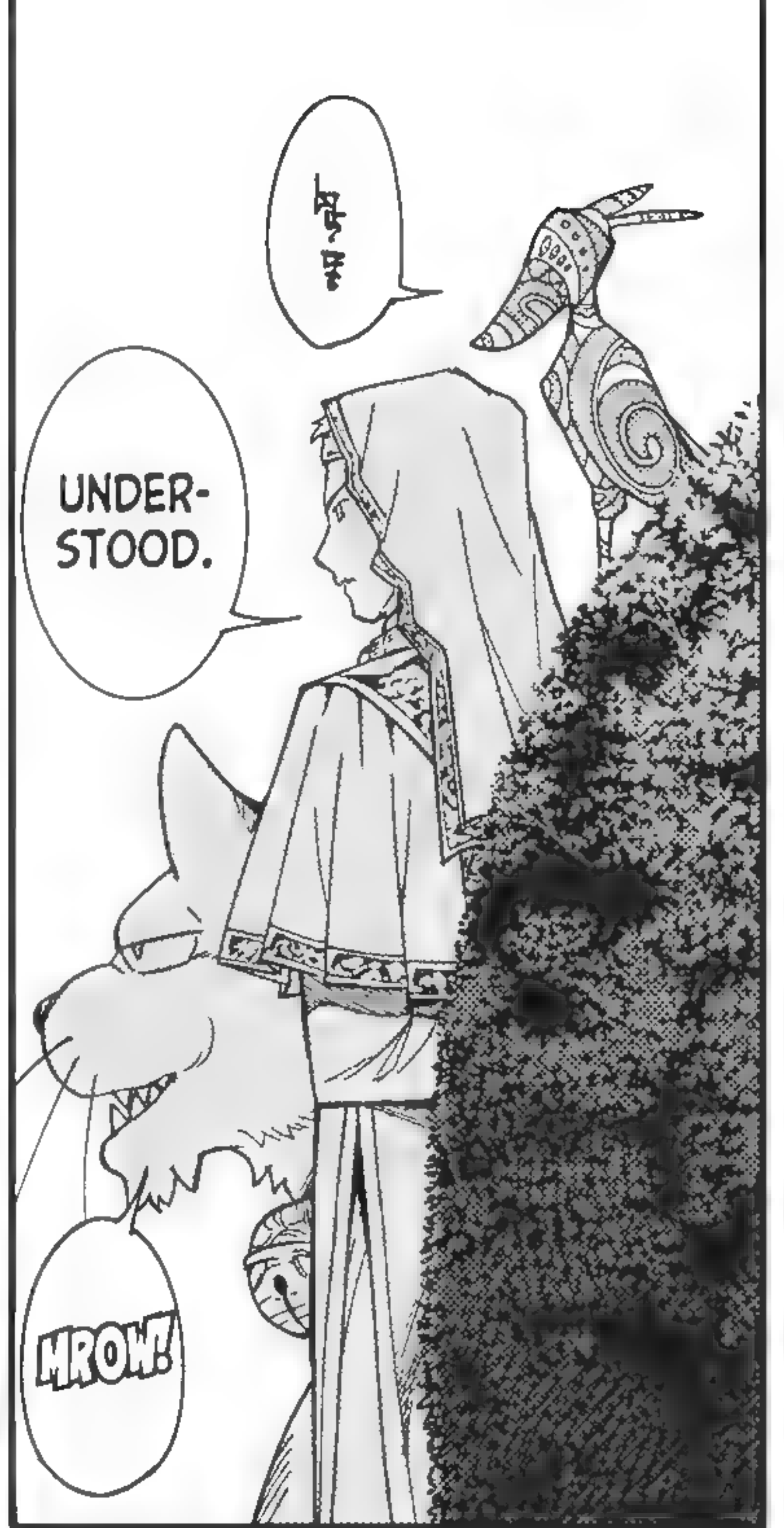
值堂

ON IT.



尔·空

ROGER.



尔·空

UNDER-  
STOOD.

MROW!



IF THEY'RE  
ATTEMPTING  
TO INFILTRATE,  
WHY NOT DO  
IT DURING THE  
DAY? MIX IN  
AMONG THE  
PATRONS?

NO  
CHANCE  
IT'S A  
STRAY?

WHOEVER SENT  
THE THING IS  
PROBABLY TRYING  
TO GAIN ACCESS  
TO THE COMPLEX  
AMID THE  
CHAOS.



OH...

OH NO!

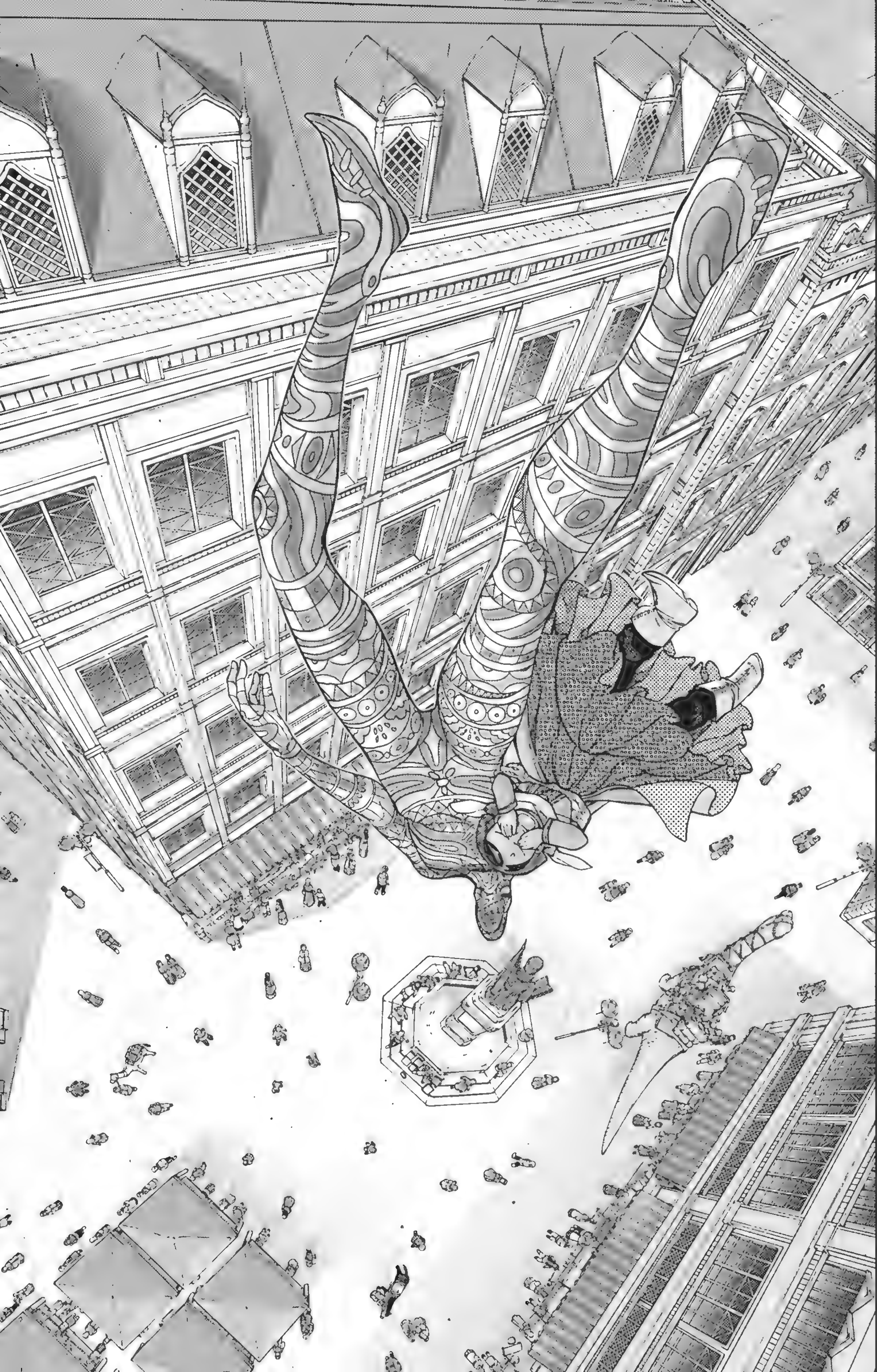
HERE IT  
COMES!



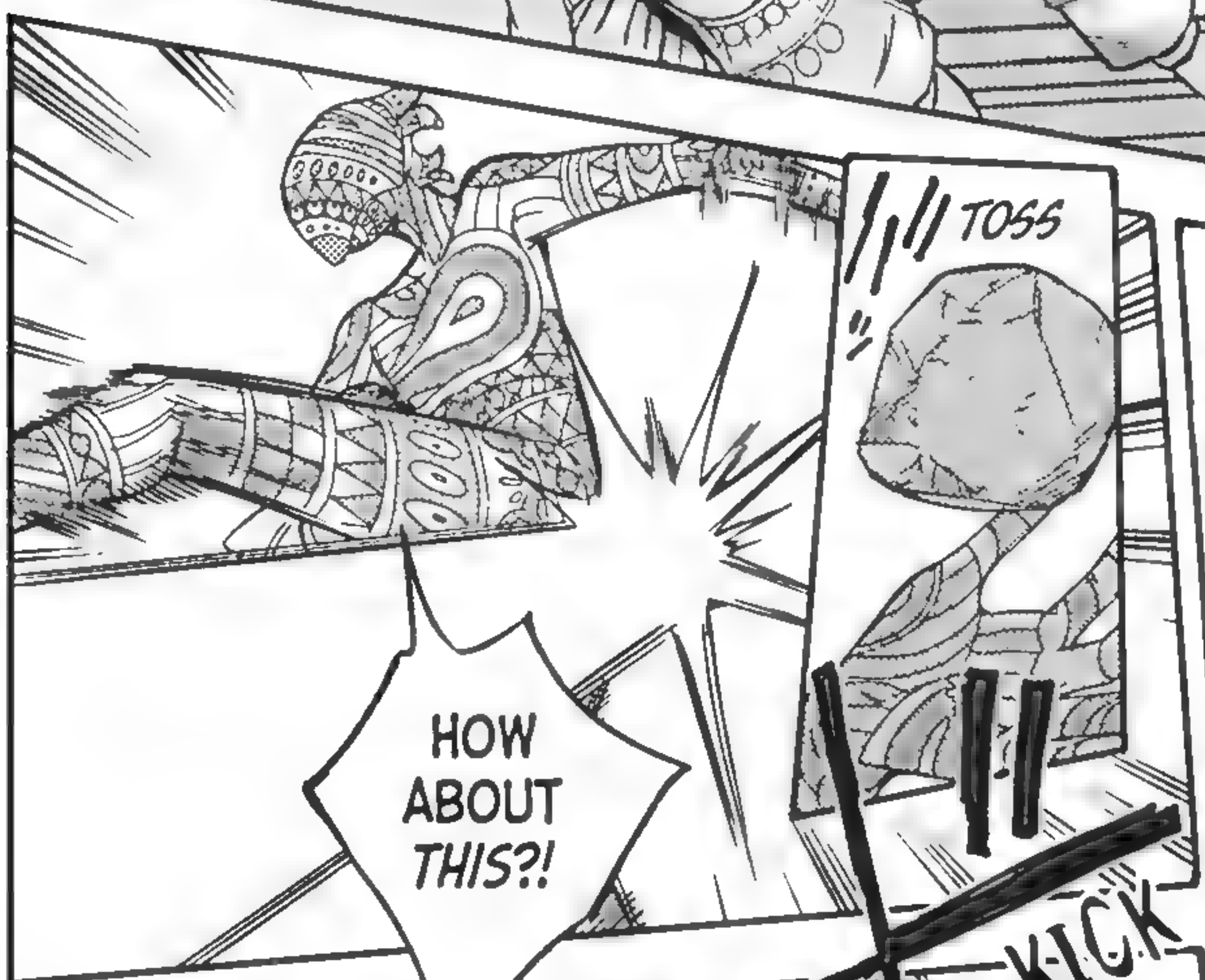
YOU  
HEARD THE  
ORDERS.  
GET ON  
SITE AND  
SUBDUE  
THE  
SPIRIT.

110  
FWIP  
...THEORIZ-  
ING WHY  
ISN'T OUR  
CONCERN.





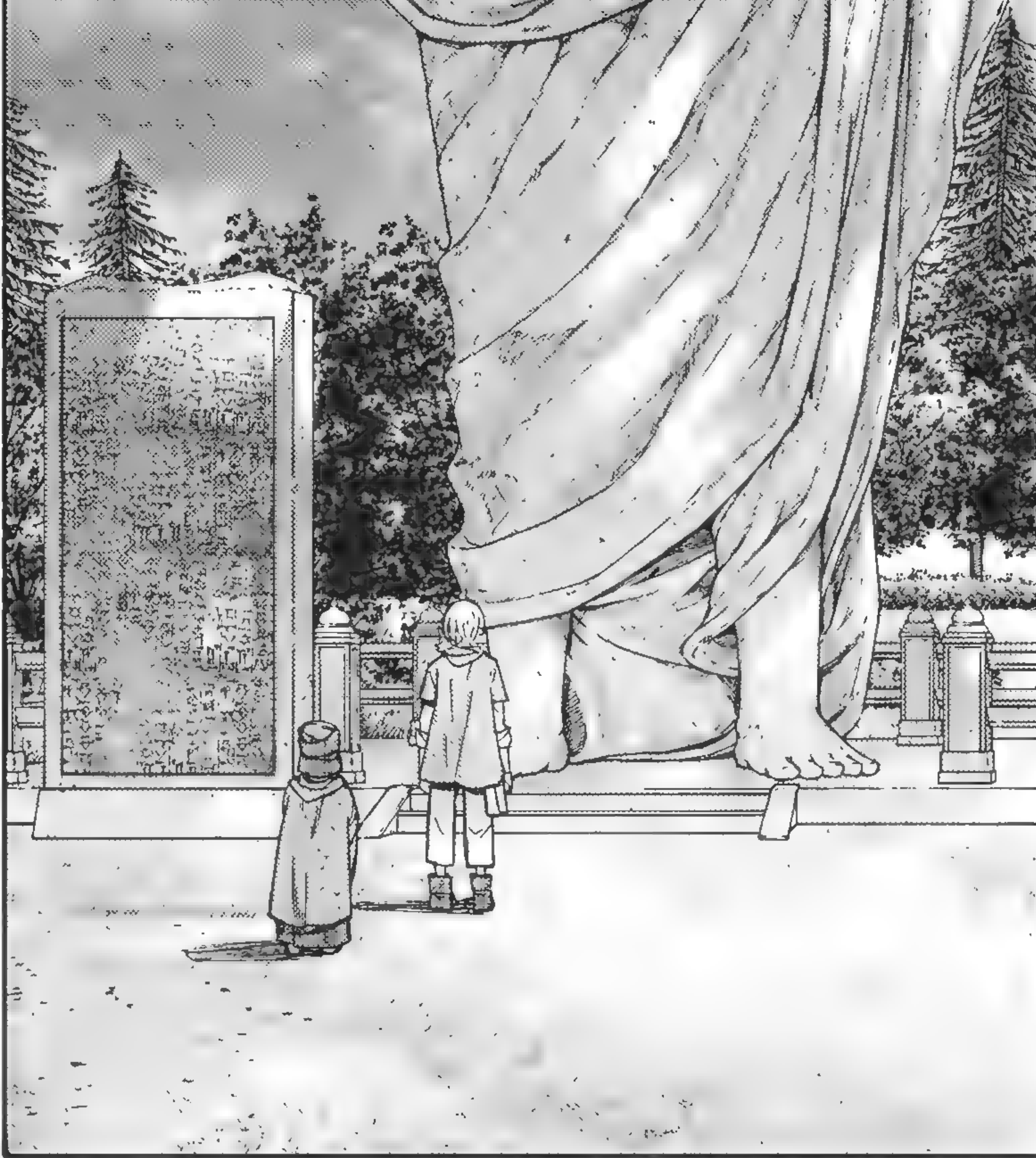












THE PEOPLE  
WITH WHOM HALF  
MY BLOOD IS  
SHARED.

THE HERO  
OF THE  
HAUPI.

THE MAGUS  
OF REASON...

ALL SEVEN ARE  
DEPICTED IN  
THE LIBRARY'S  
MONUMENT...

...BUT  
ONLY THIS  
MAGUS HAS  
THEIR OWN  
STATUE.

THE ONLY  
ONE NOT TO  
RETURN FROM  
THE BATTLE  
WITH THE  
EMISSARY...

PLIP...

FWSSHHH  
ア  
ア  
ア  
ア  
ア





I BROUGHT  
YOU HERE  
BECAUSE I  
THOUGHT IT  
MIGHT DO  
YOU GOOD  
TO SEE HIM.



SEE HOW HE  
STANDS AT  
ATTENTION?  
HE'S WATCHING  
OVER THE  
CENTRAL  
LIBRARY.

THIS WHOLE  
PARK WAS  
DESIGNED IN  
THE MAGUS'  
HONOR,  
Y'KNOW.



I PINCHED  
MY CHEEKS  
SO HARD,  
TEARS CAME  
TO MY  
EYES!

NO, UM!  
THIS IS  
JUST...!

WHY'D YOU  
PINCH 'EM  
IN THE FIRST  
PLACE...?



THE  
TEARS  
ARE...

...I'M  
SORRY.

IT'S JUST  
SO OVER-  
WHELMING...



...I KNOW  
I SHOULD  
STOP. IT'S  
IRREVERENT  
TO CRY IN  
FRONT OF  
THE MAGUS,  
'CAUSE...

BUT...

GOOD  
HEAVENS,  
CHILD!





WE SHOULD  
ALL BE HAPPY.  
HE SHOULDN'T  
HAVE TO SEE  
ME CRY...

HE SACRIFICED  
EVERYTHING.  
HE GAVE HIS  
LIFE THAT WE  
COULD HAVE  
OURS, AND...  
AND...



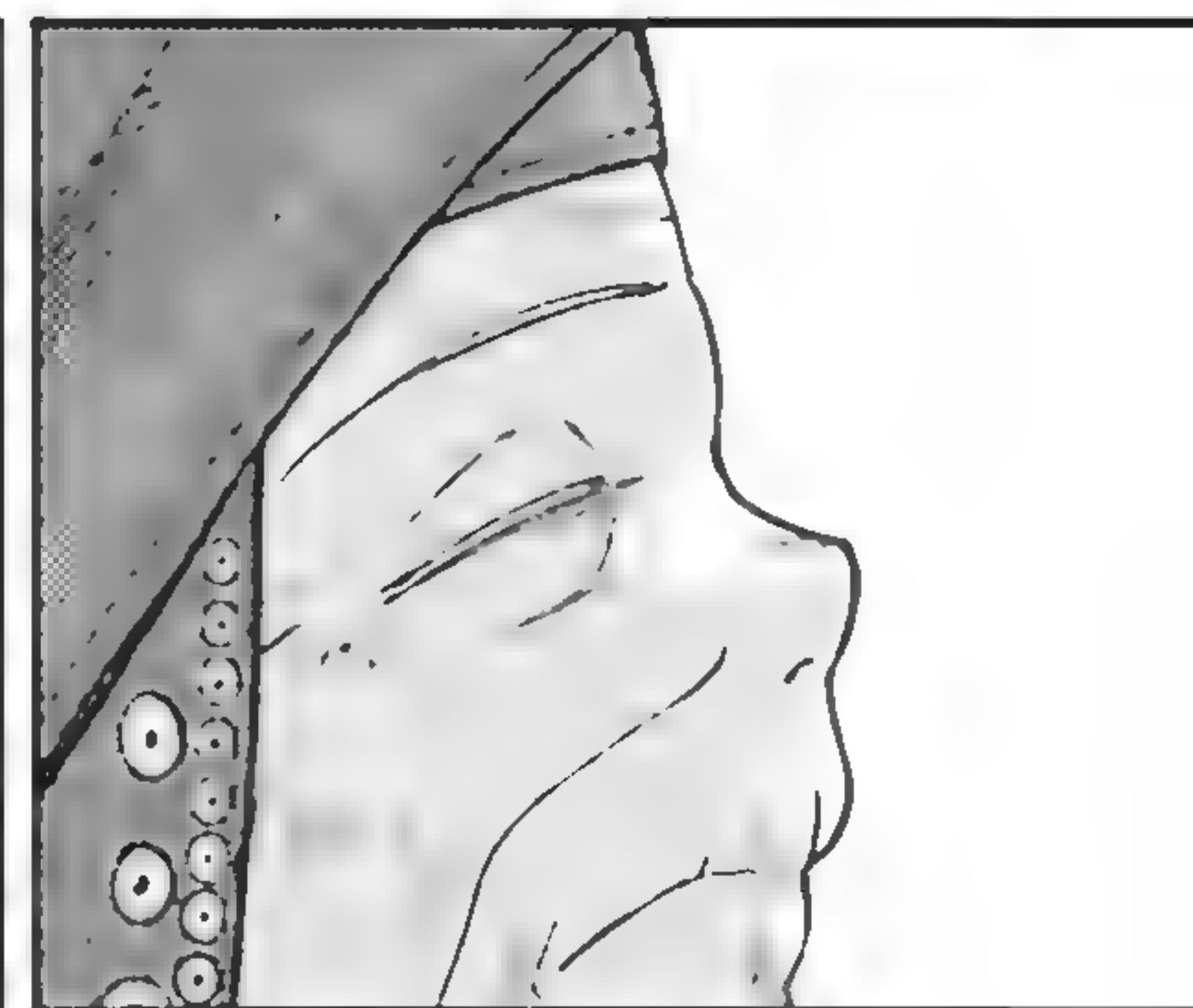
NO, NO.  
NO NEED  
FOR THAT.

I KNOW  
MY WAY  
WELL  
ENOUGH.

IT'S  
ALREADY  
DARK  
OUT. I'LL  
WALK YOU  
HOME.



WELL, I  
SUPPOSE  
I SHOULD  
BE GETTING  
BACK.



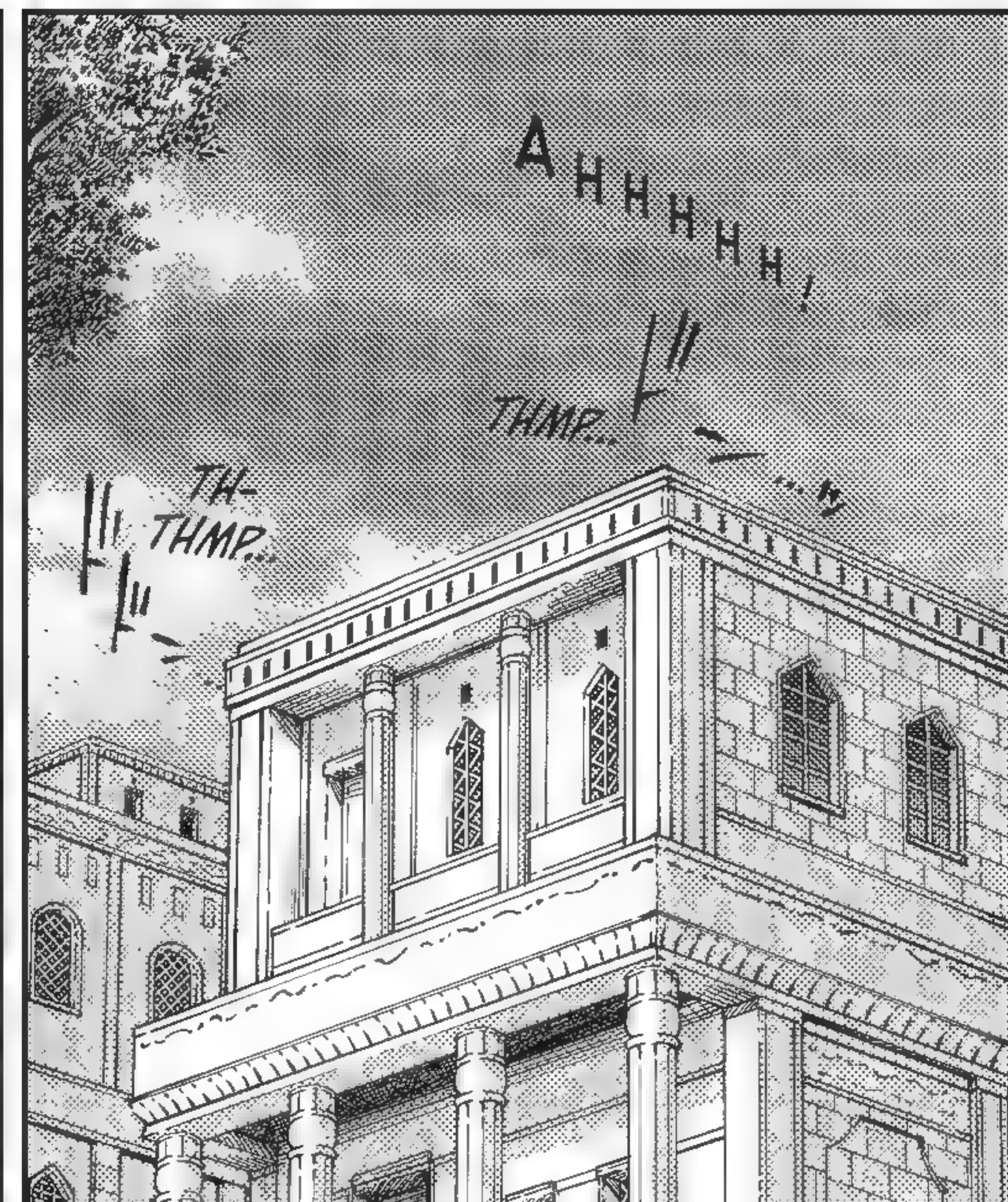
IT'S  
TRUE. I  
WOULD.

AND I FANCY  
YOU'D LIKE  
TO SPEND A  
WHILE MORE  
IN THIS  
PARK, NO?

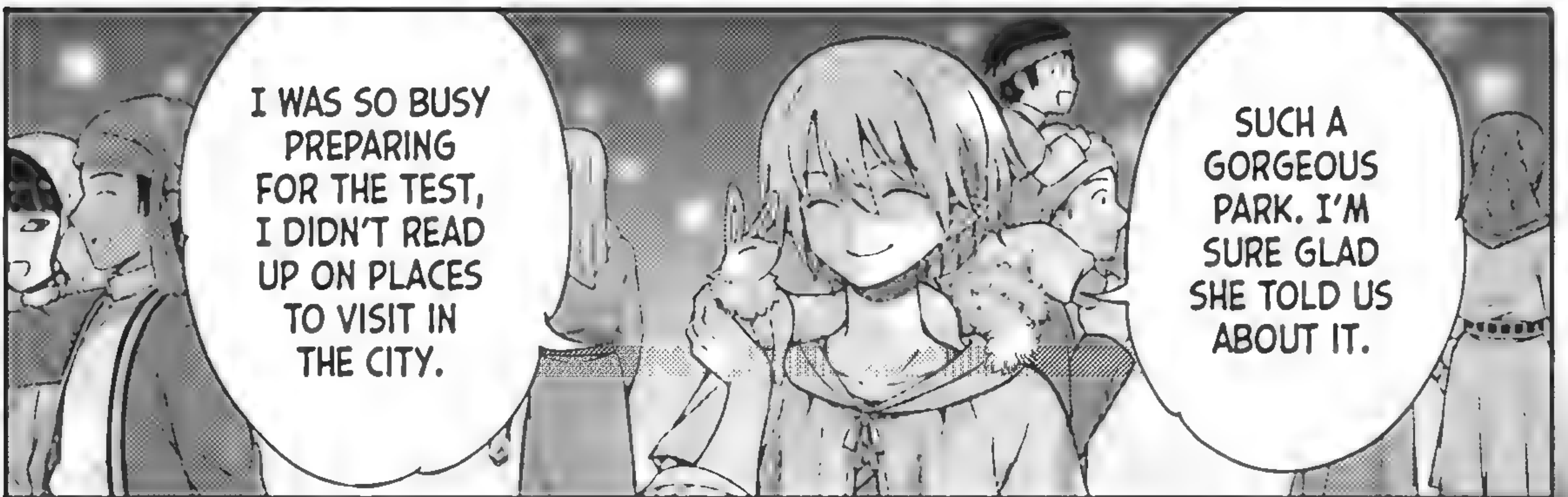
*Seems like  
it might  
be even  
lovelier at  
night...*





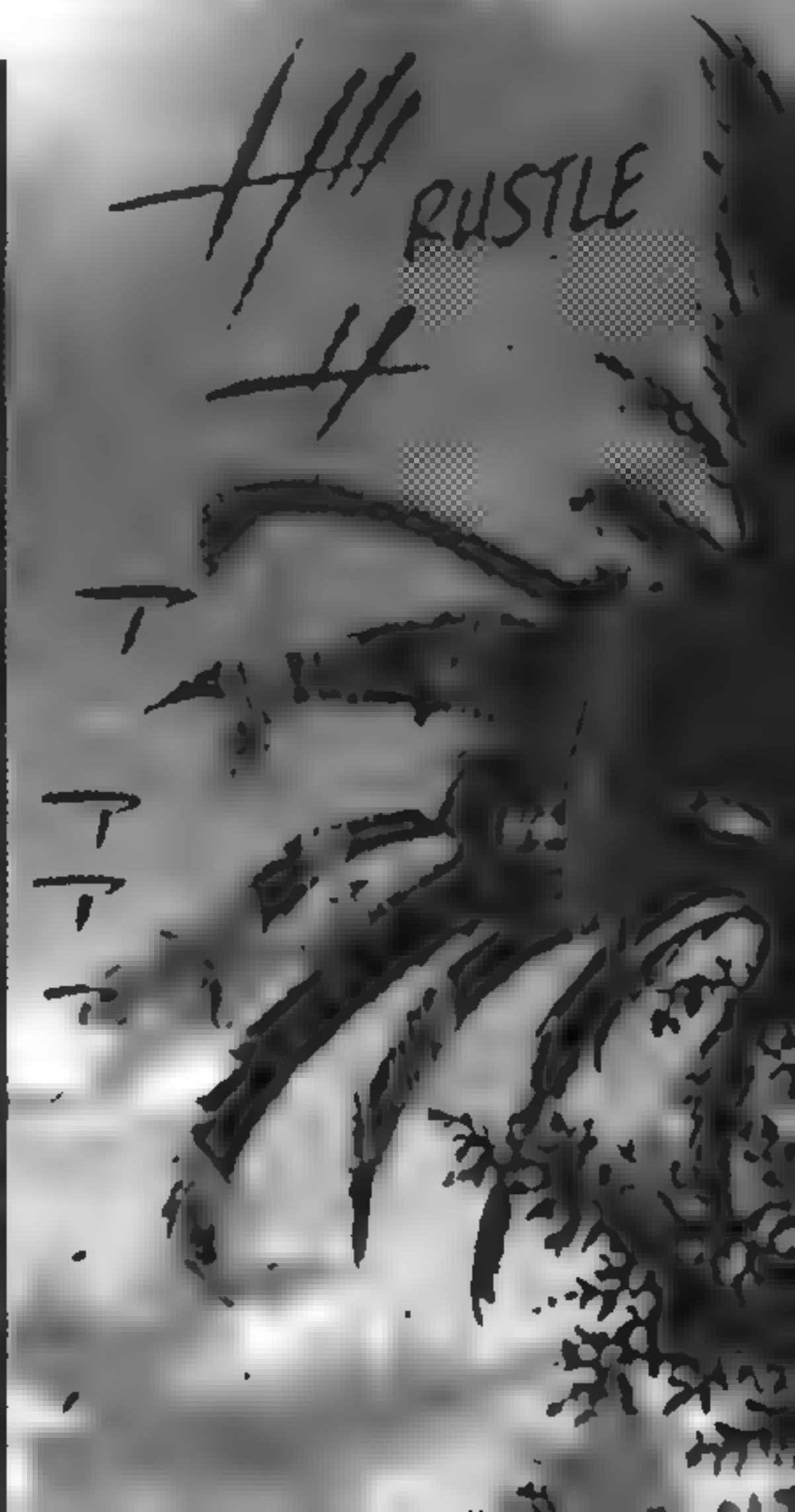




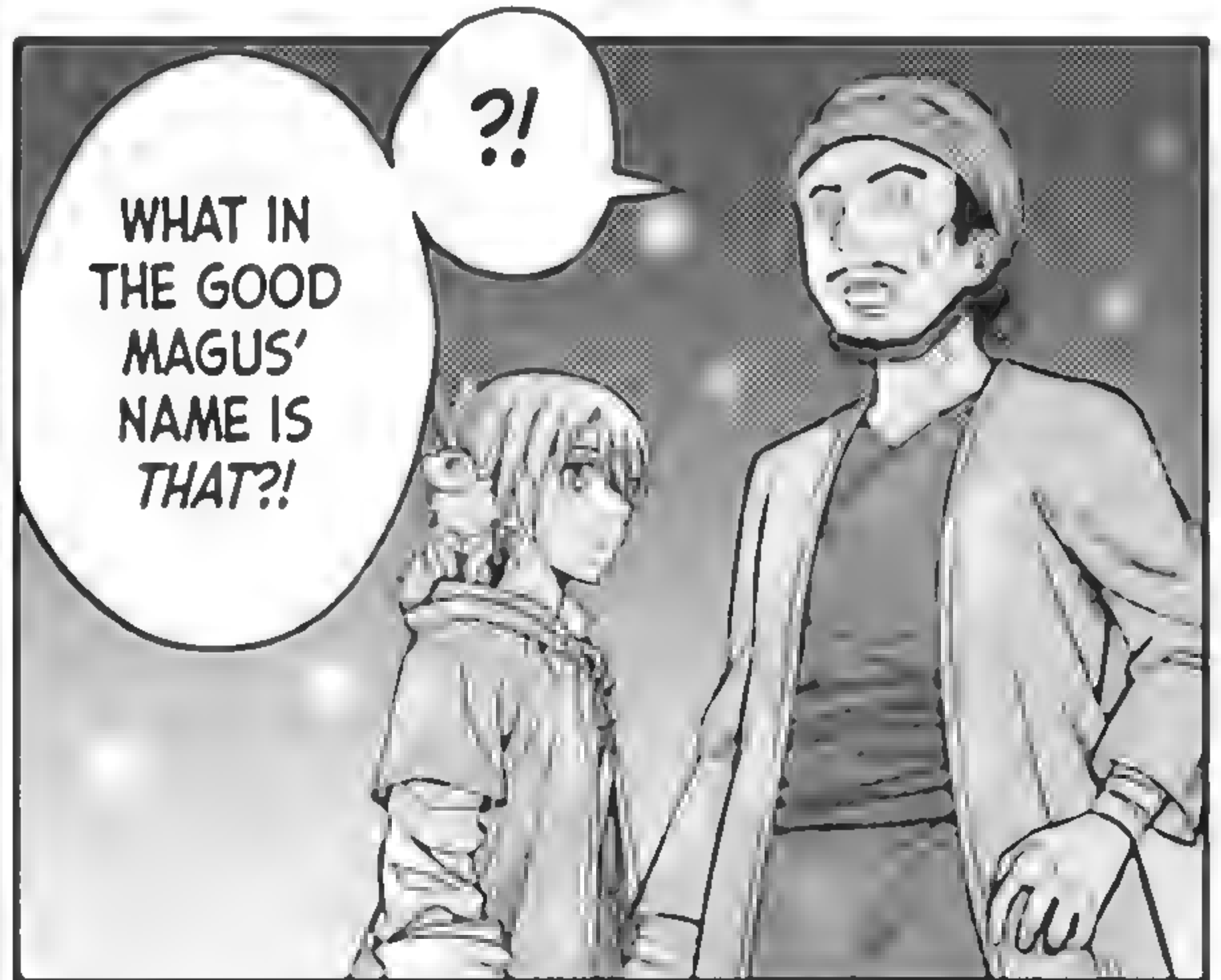


HEEED  
...  
DADDY...

WAHHH ...























CLAMOR

CLAMOR

YEAH!  
GET  
DOWN!!

HOW  
DARE YOU  
CLIMB UP  
ON THE  
GREAT  
MAGUS?!



YOU  
SCOUNDREL!  
YOU'RE  
GONNA PAY  
FOR THAT!



THE PROTEC-  
TIONS OFFICE  
WILL BE ON  
ITS WAY! JUST  
EVACUATE THE  
AREA, QUICKLY  
AND QUIETLY!

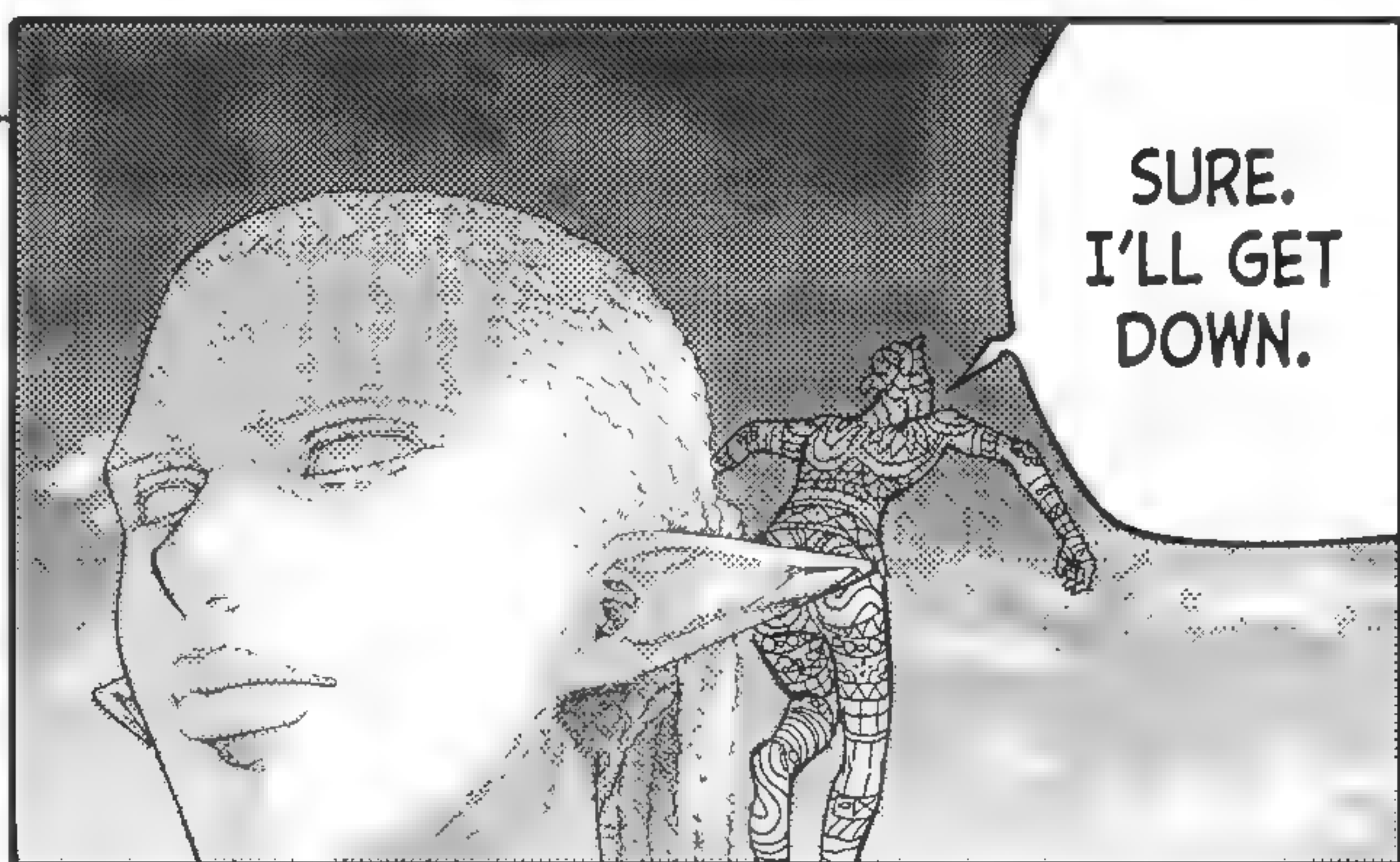
WE  
MUSTN'T  
PROVOKE  
IT!



!!

EEEK!

HE'S  
COMING  
THIS  
WAY!



SURE.  
I'LL GET  
DOWN.



THMP



I DUNNO  
HOW MUCH  
I CAN  
HELP...

...BUT I  
HAVE TO  
DO SOME-  
THING!

MOST  
PEOPLE  
HERE DON'T  
REALIZE  
WHAT THAT  
THING IS.

DASH









NO...



AHHHHH!



KRNCH



STAY  
LOW  
TO THE  
GROUND!



GRRNNN











*Infused  
with Fire  
Mana...*

*Imagine  
a spark.*

*...and can be  
shaped and  
directed.*

*...the spark intensifies in strength...*

attracted.

strength...

Casting is the art of using spell seals to enhance and precisely manipulate the properties of mana.

And given that a

The mana residing in

And given  
that a  
person's body  
is composed  
of six parts  
water...

The mana  
residing in  
Theo was  
predominantly  
of the element  
of Water.



I'VE HEARD OF  
MOTHERS FINDING  
THE STRENGTH TO  
HAUL CHILDREN AND  
CHESTS OF FAMILY  
HEIRLOOMS FROM A  
BURNING HOME...

...THIS ENABLED  
IN HIM THE  
MATLALCUEYE...

...BUT  
POWER  
OF THIS  
MAGNITUDE  
IS ABSURD!

...AN IMMENSE  
PHYSICAL  
STRENGTHENING  
FUELED BY  
WATER MANA.

...LET THE  
STATUE BE  
DESTROYED!

I CAN'T  
JUST...

I'M  
STUCK  
...!

I CAN'T  
LAY IT  
DOWN  
GENTLY...

...AND IF  
I DROP IT  
AND RUN,  
IT'LL SMASH  
APART WHEN  
IT HITS THE  
GROUND!

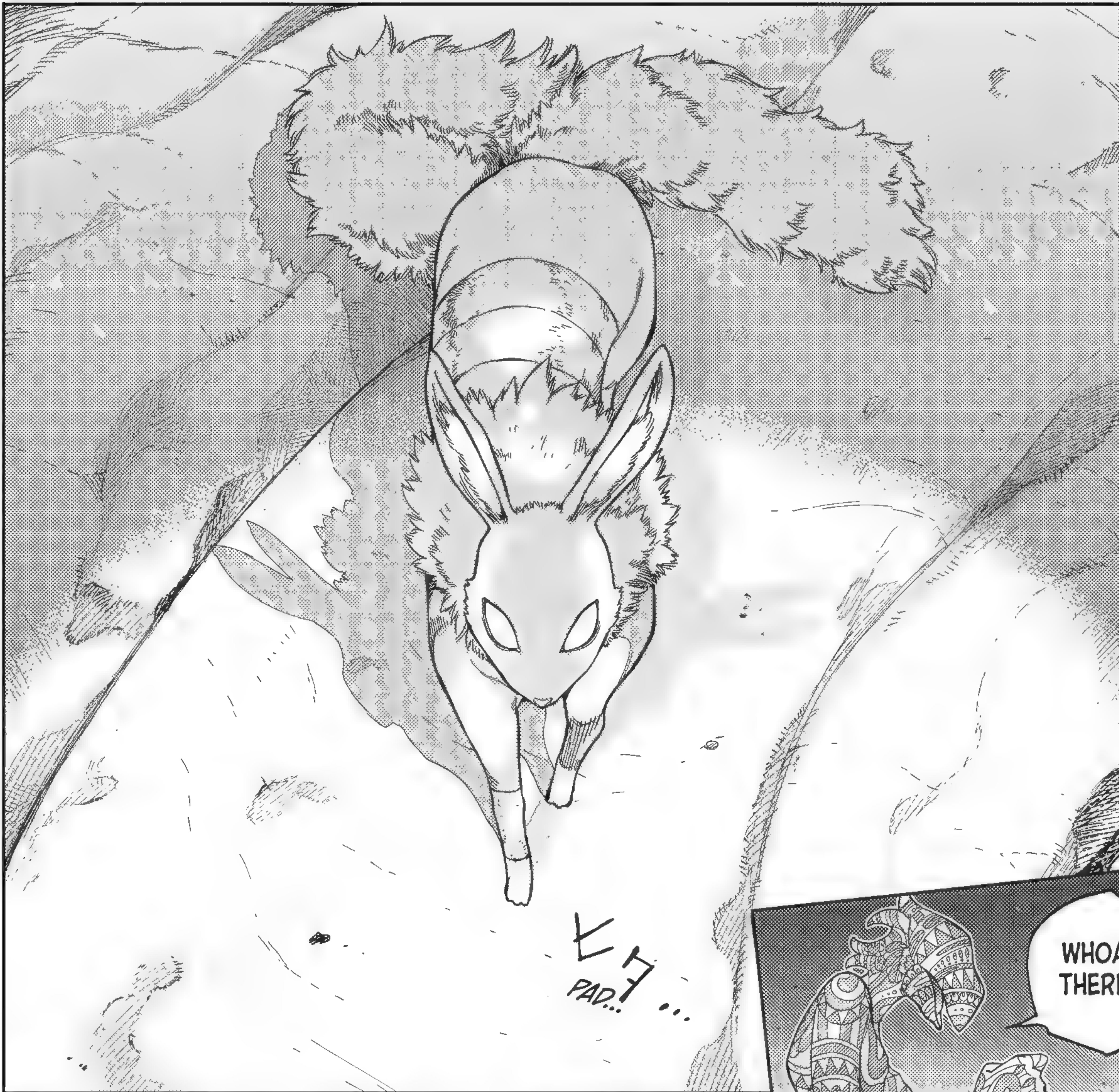
GRARRKKK

GRIP









Y I  
PAD... ..



WHOA,  
THERE.



HOW  
DARE YOU  
THREATEN  
MY BE-  
LOVED  
THEO?!

YOU  
THIRD-  
RATE  
MON-  
GREL...

BZZT  
BZZT

BZZT  
BZZT



WHAT?



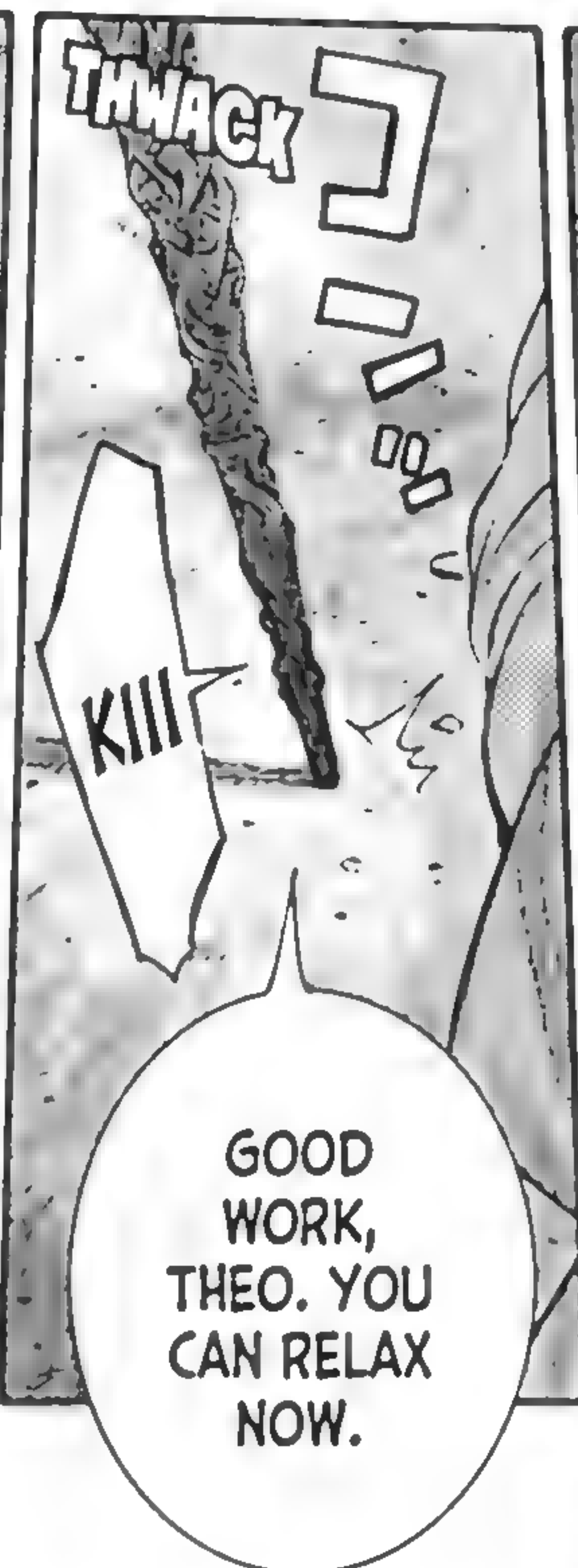
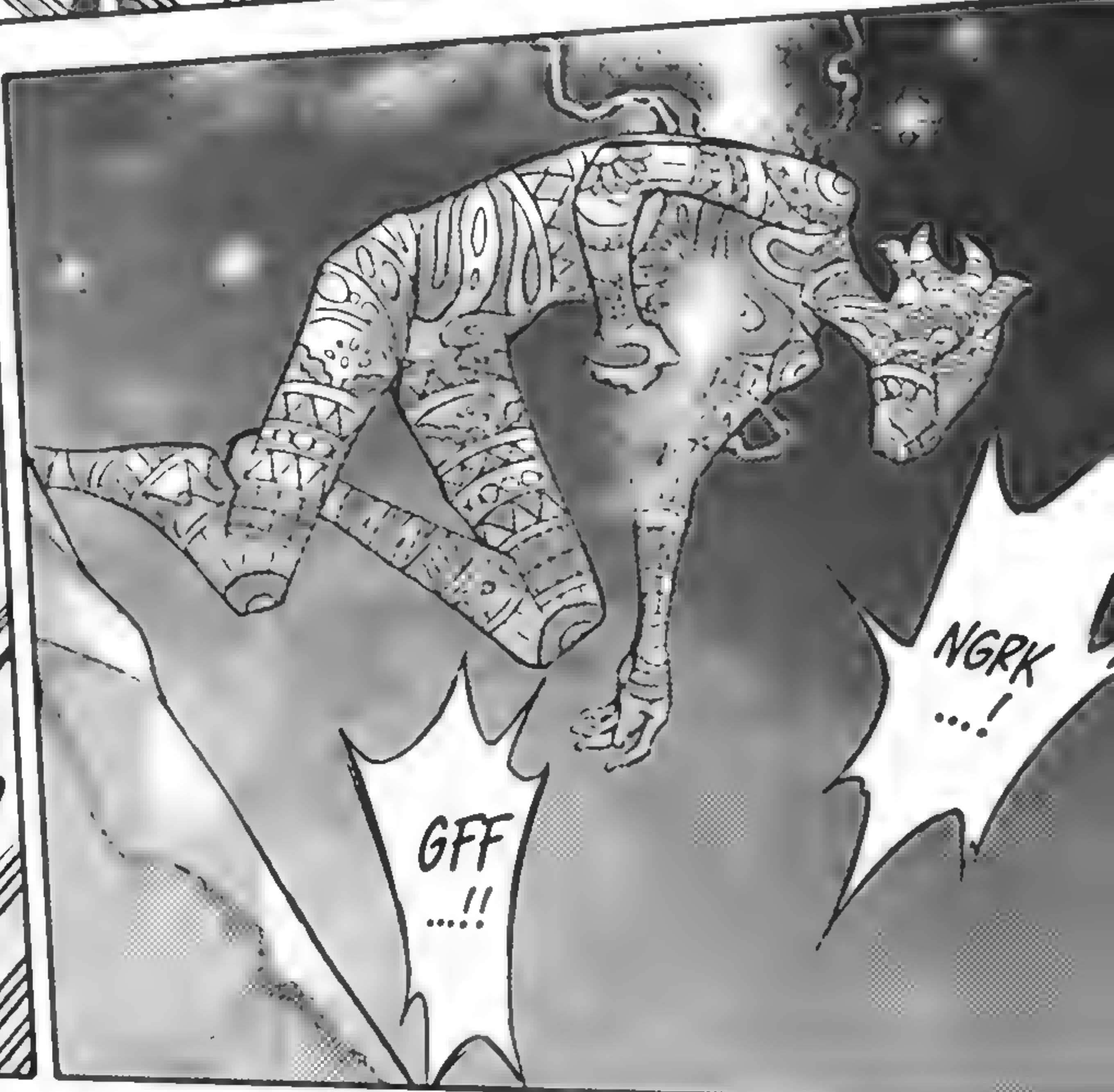
HEY,  
LITTLE  
ONE. ARE  
YOU SOME  
KIND OF  
SPIRIT?

IT'S NOT SAFE  
HERE. I'M ALL  
TOO HAPPY TO  
PULVERIZE MAN,  
BUT YOU NEED  
TO RUN ALONG  
SO YOU DON'T  
GET HURT.

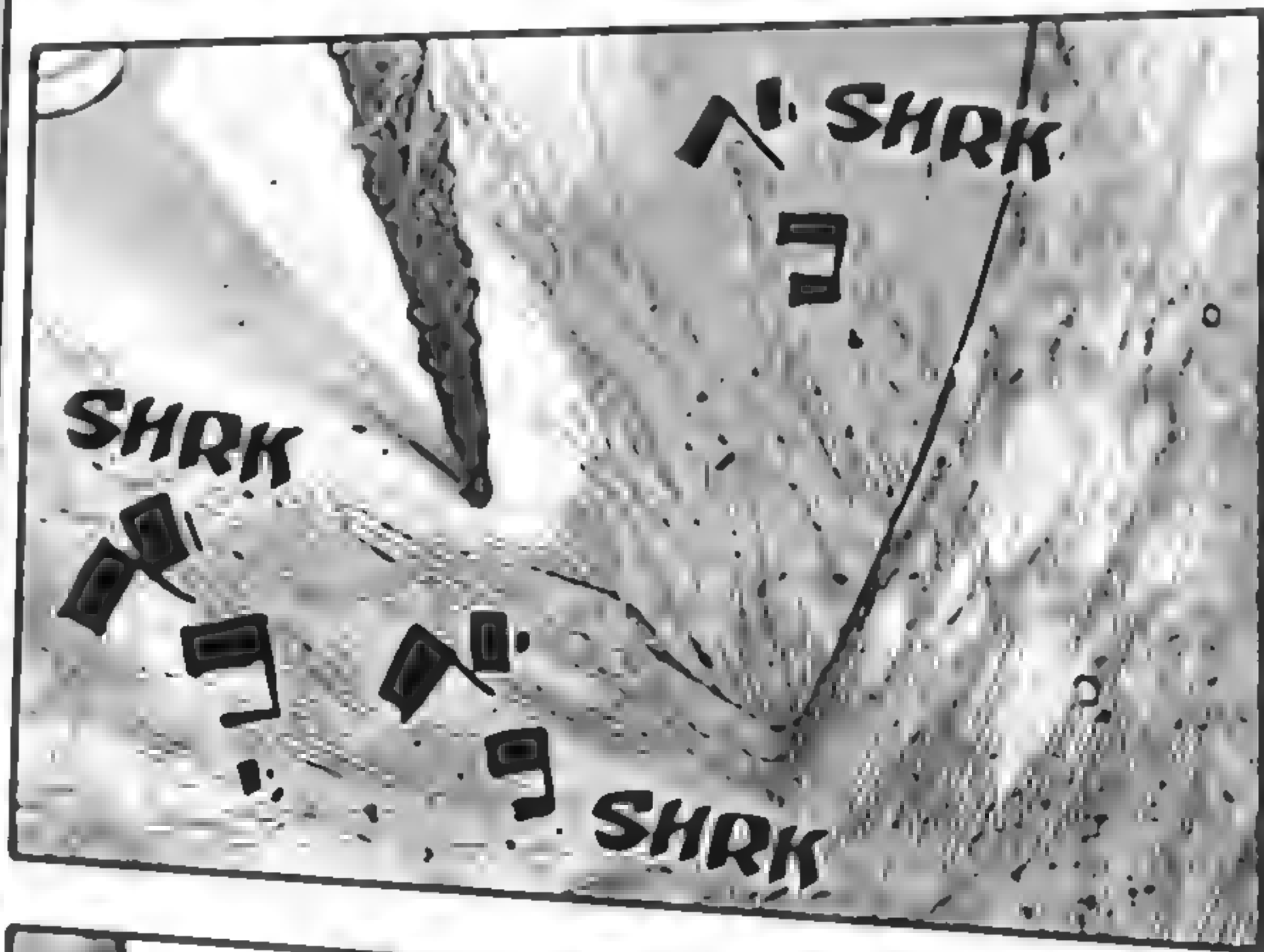
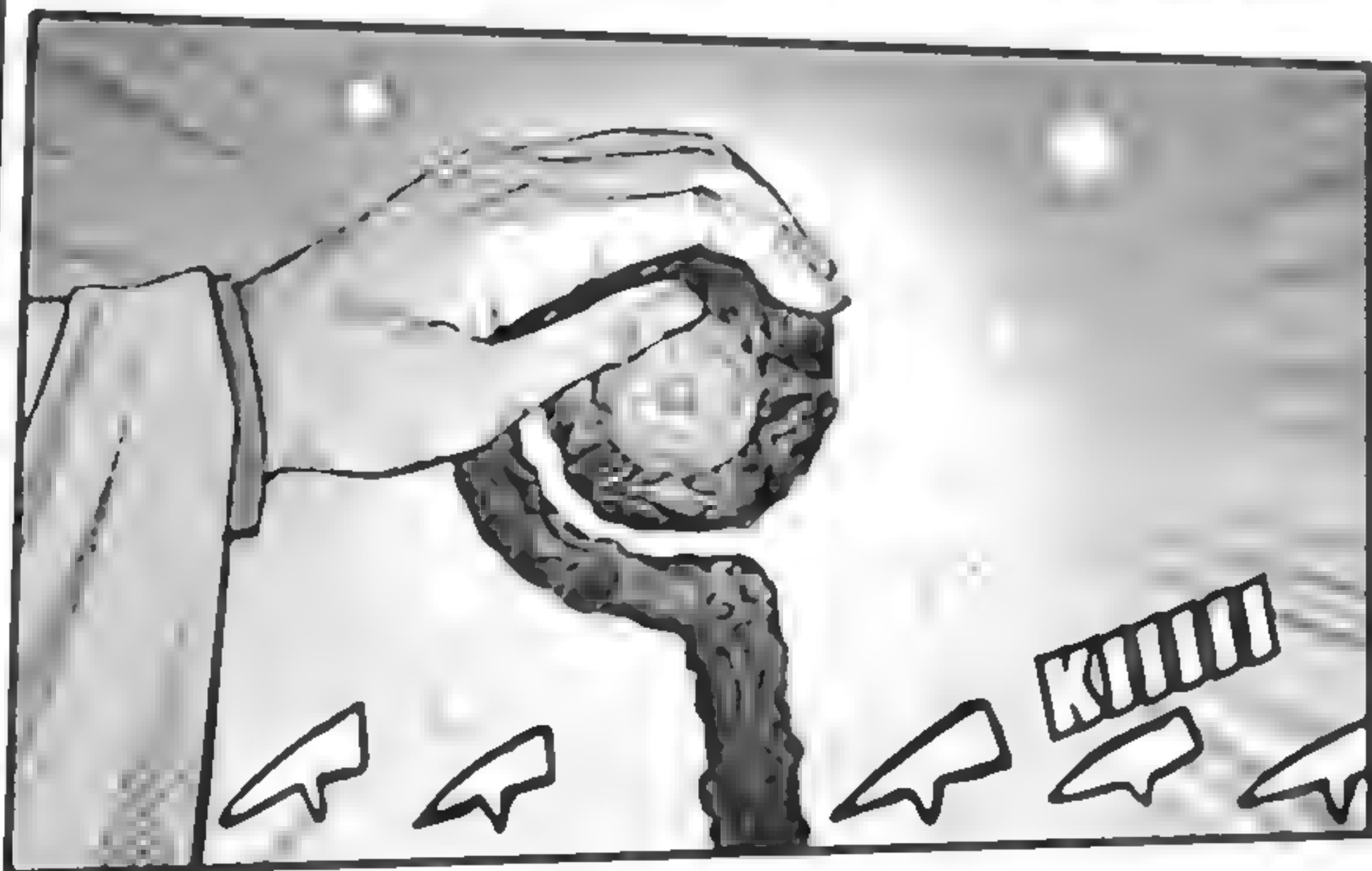




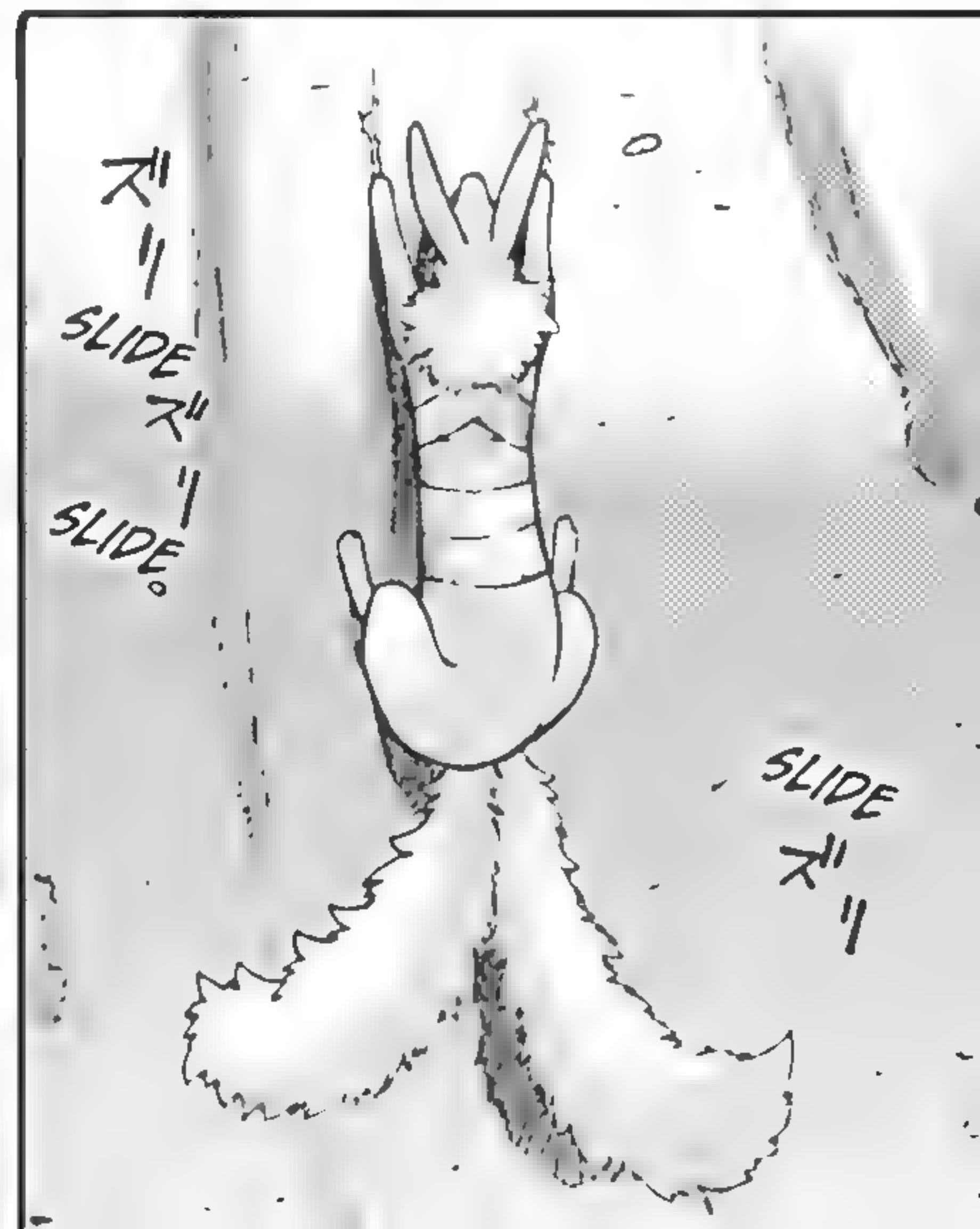
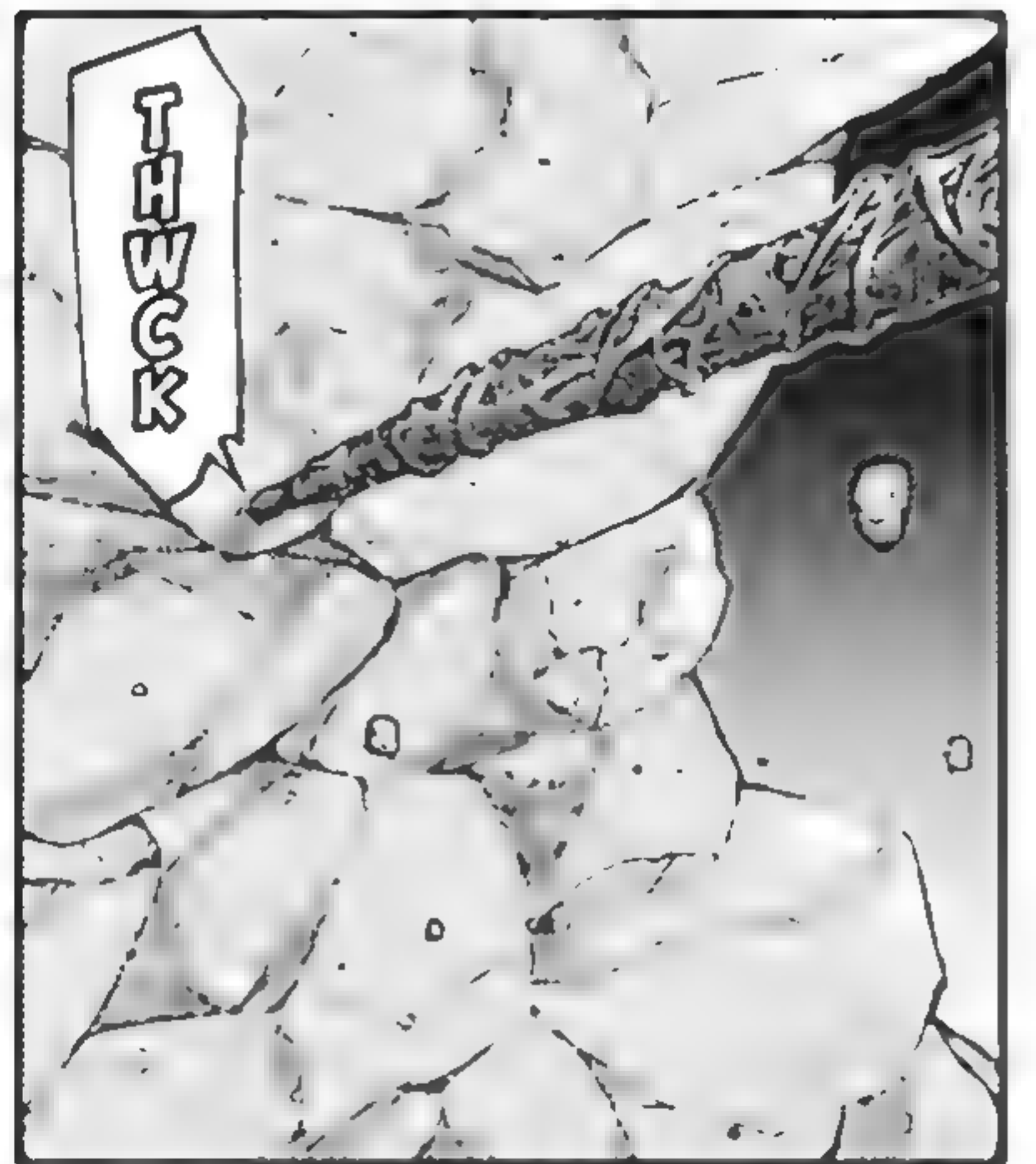
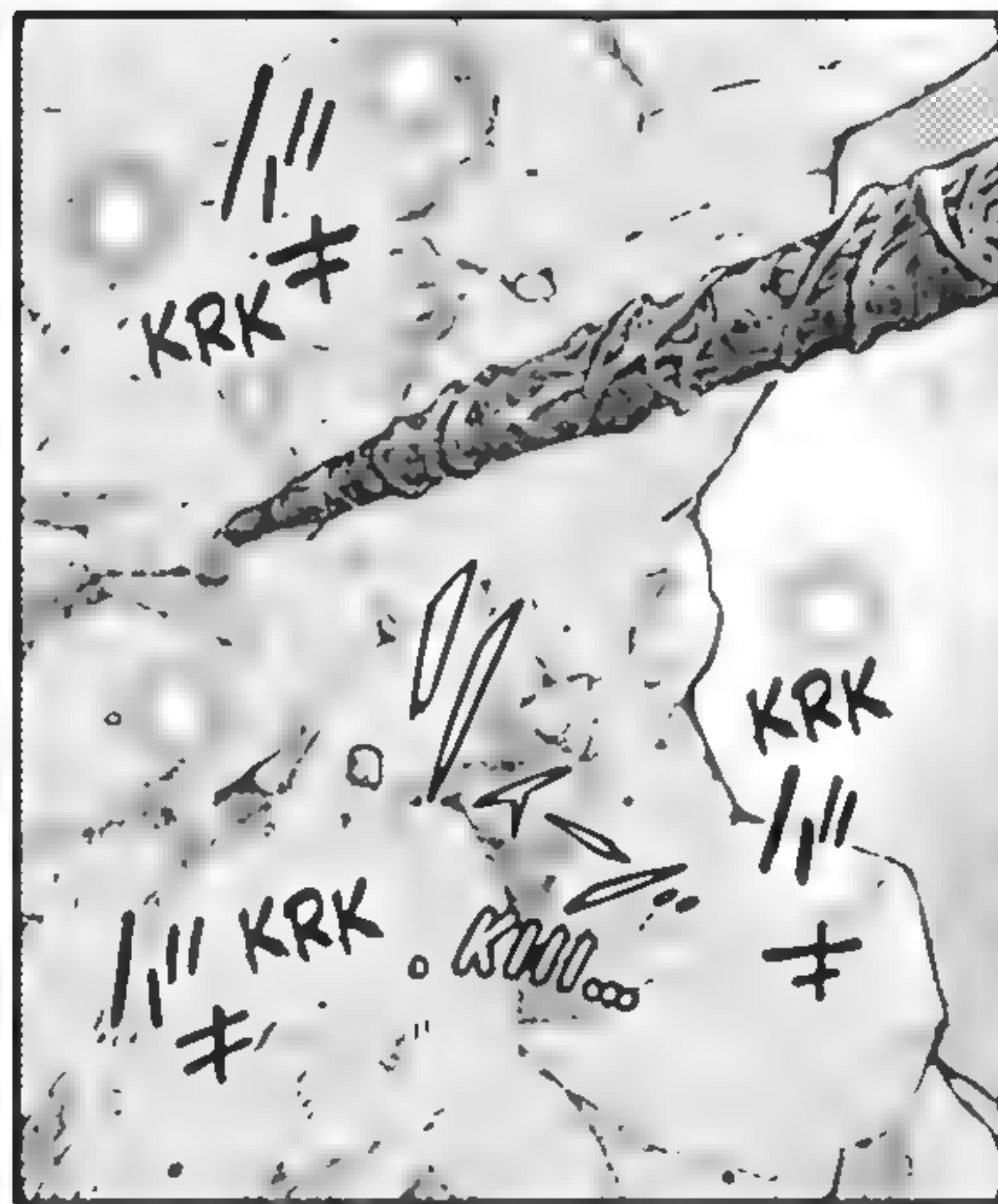
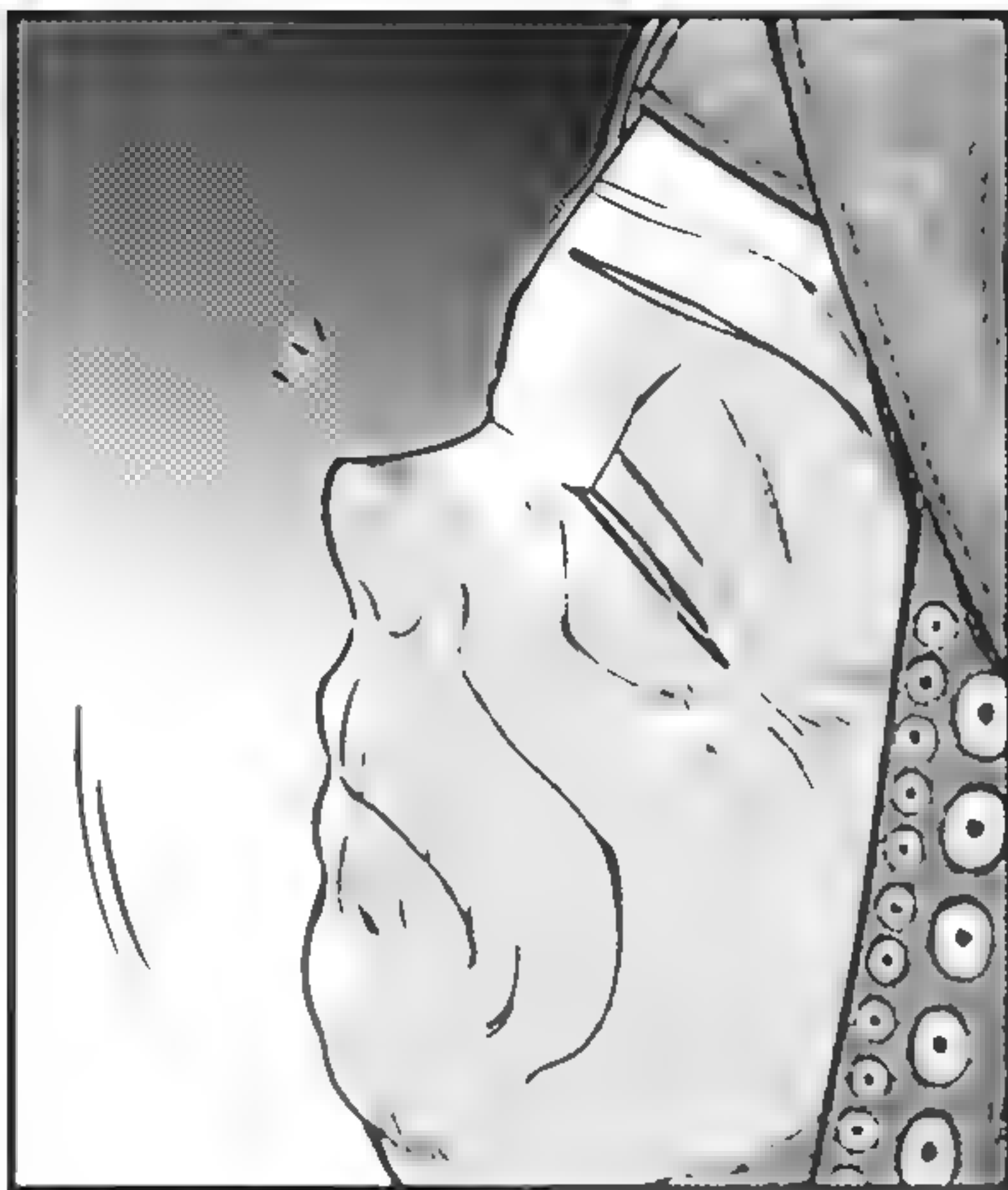
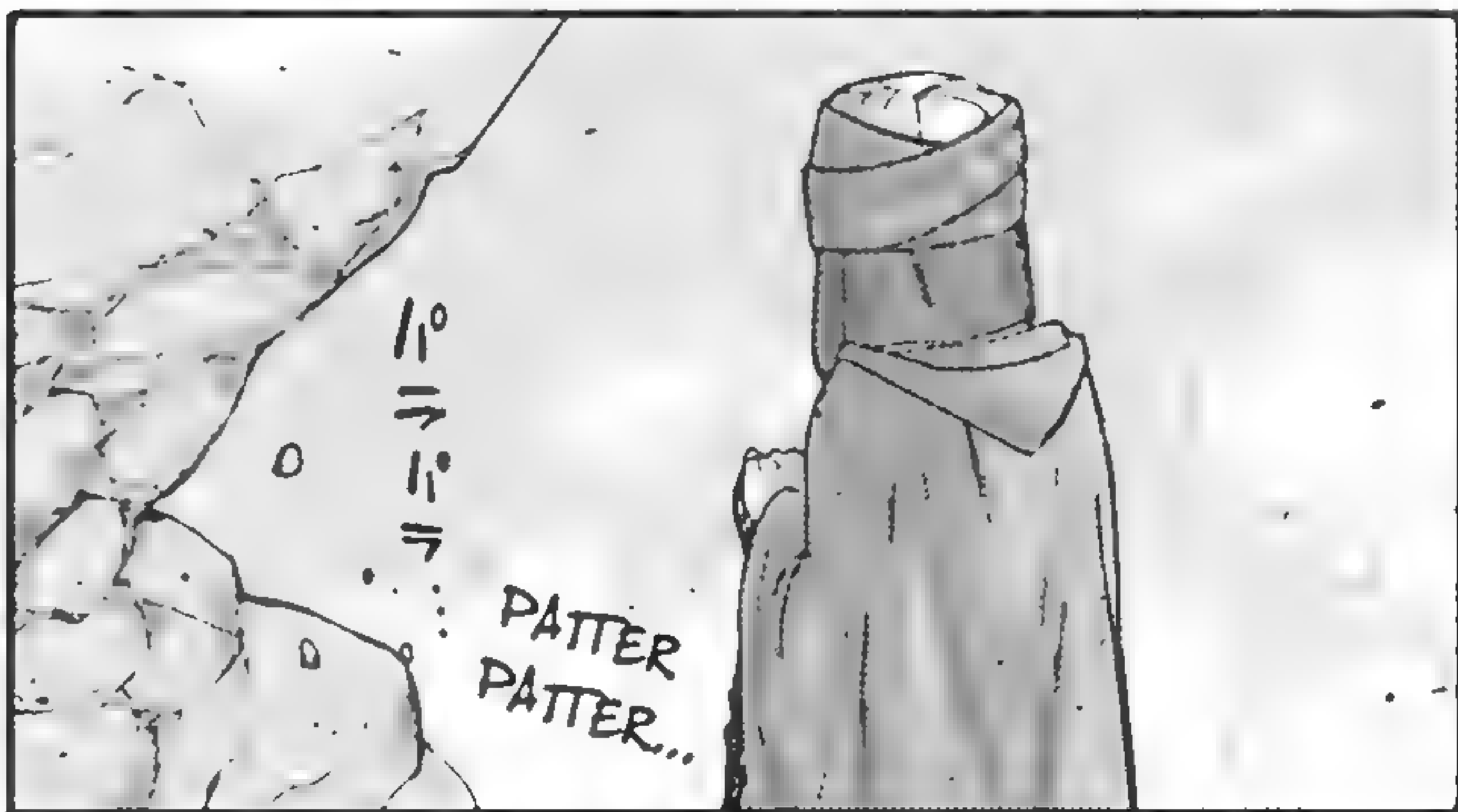
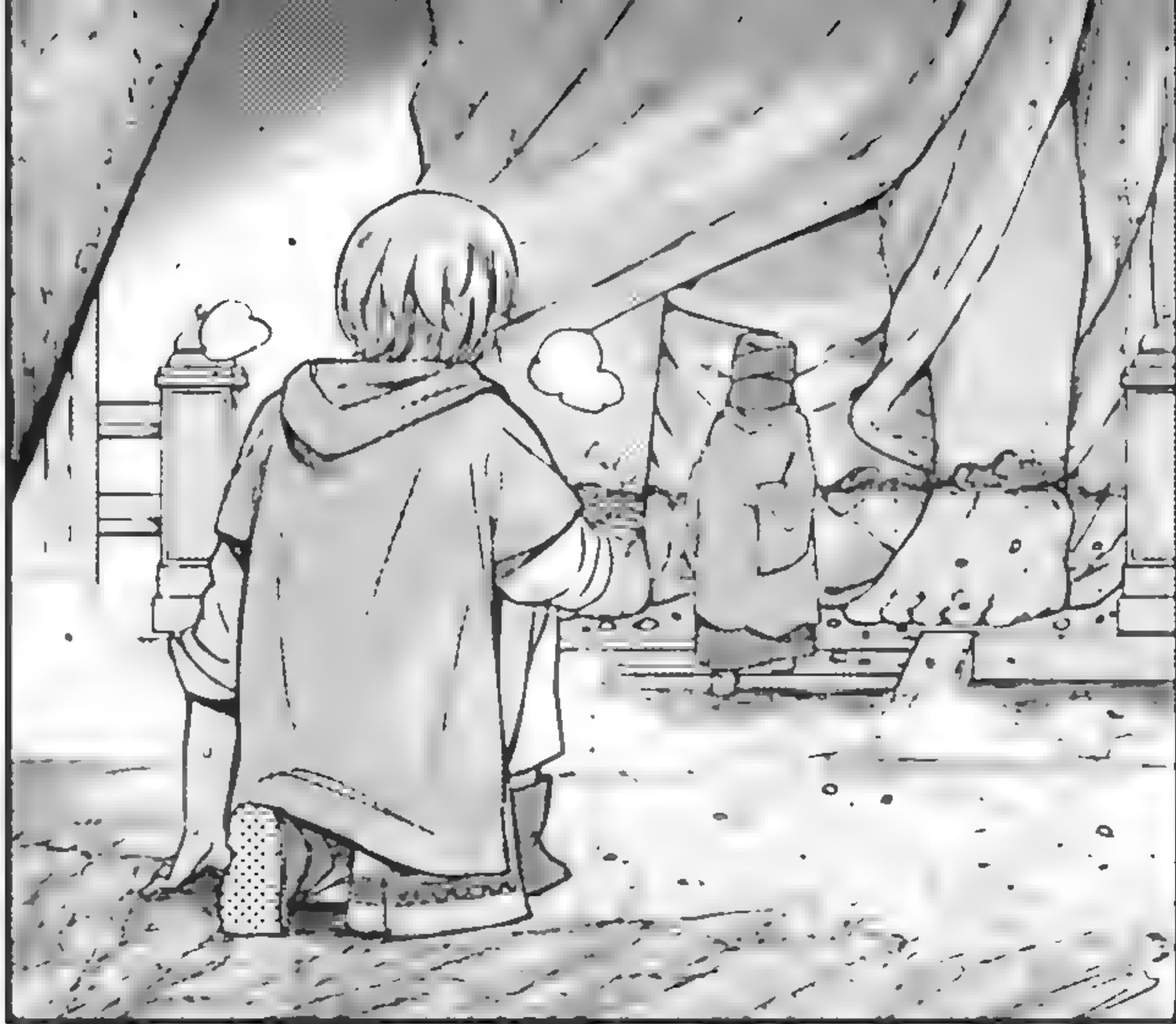




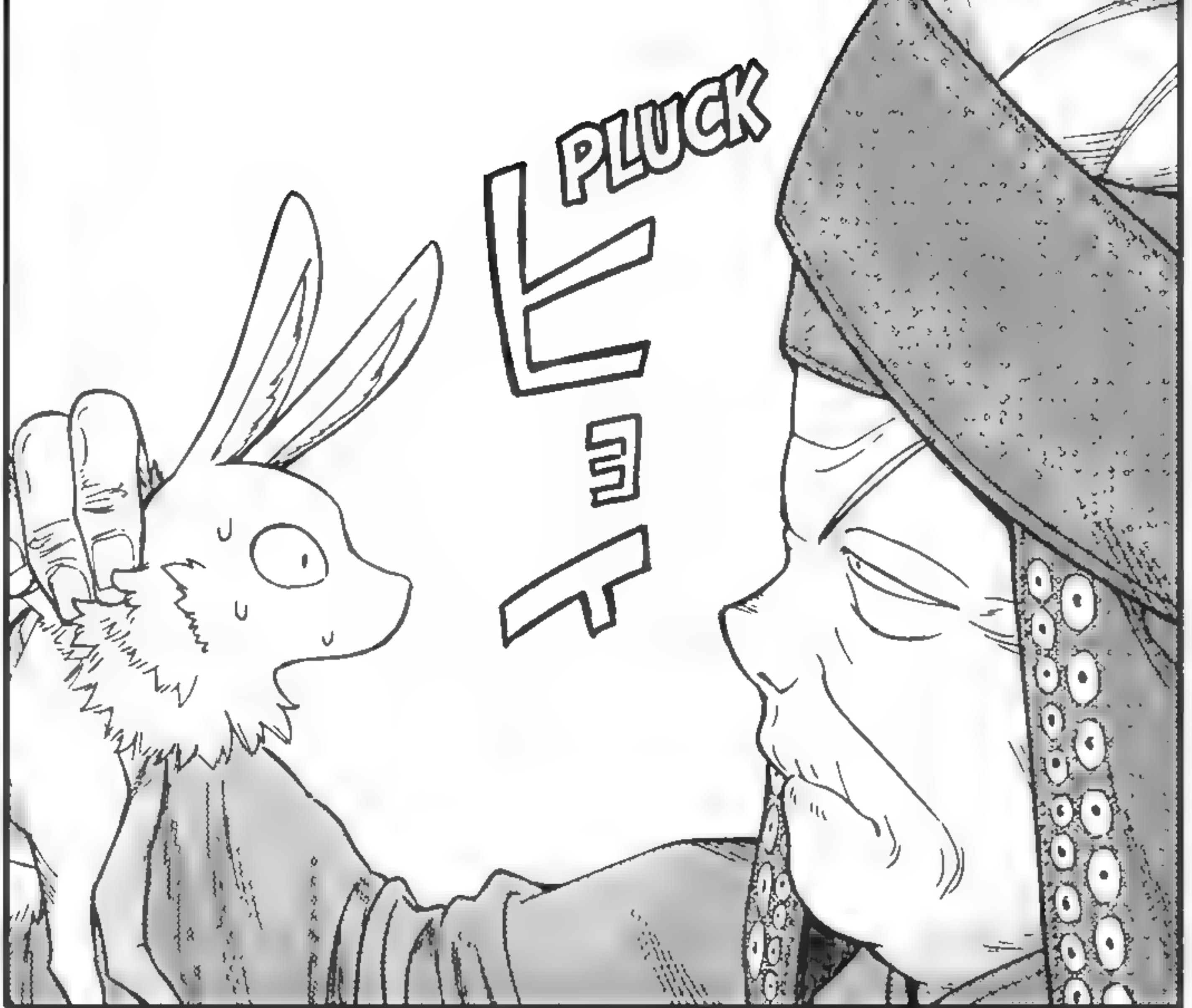




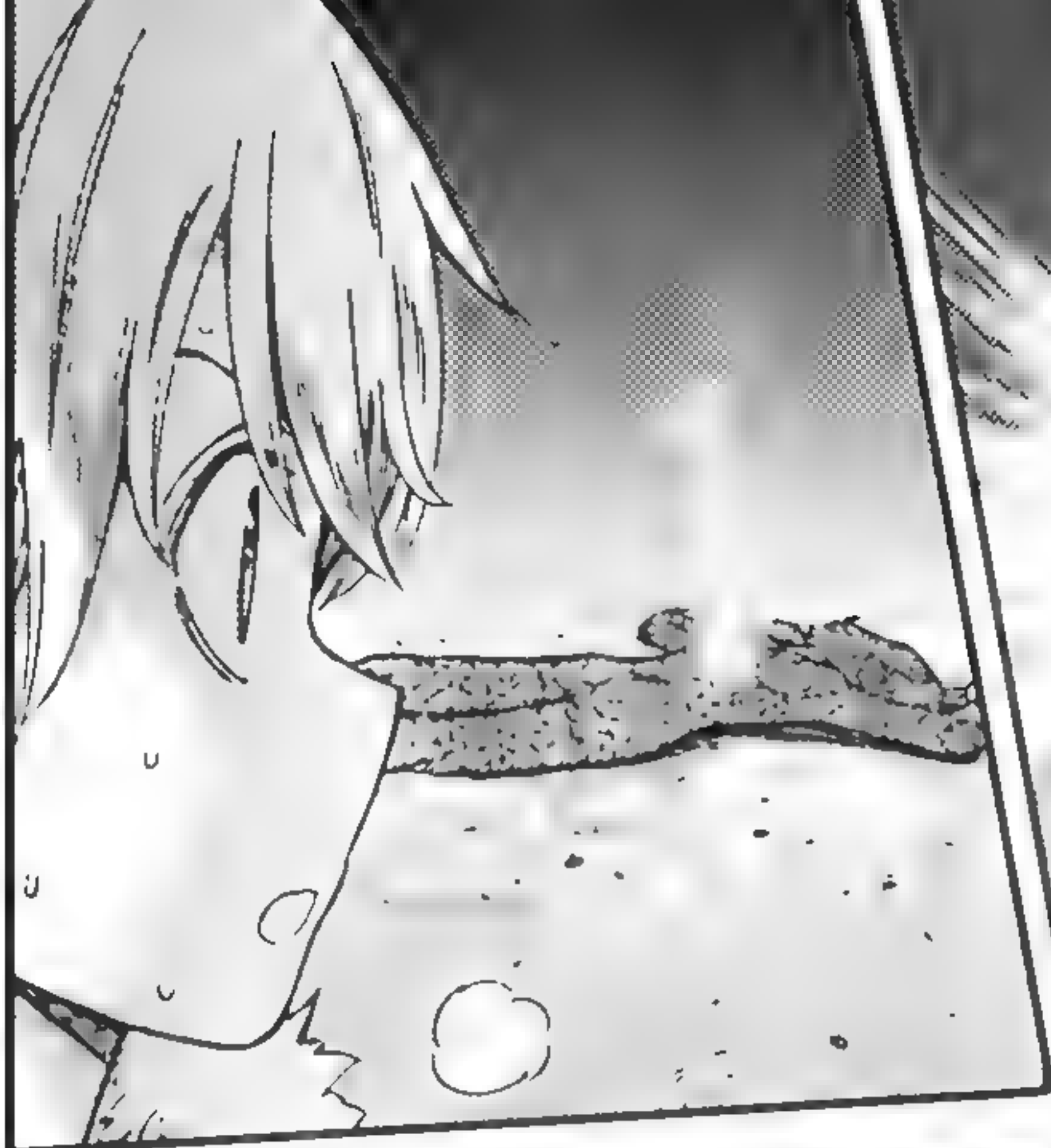












THAT'S  
A TITLE  
RESERVED  
FOR THE  
GREATEST  
EARTH  
MAGI!



A  
TRANSMUTATIONIST?!

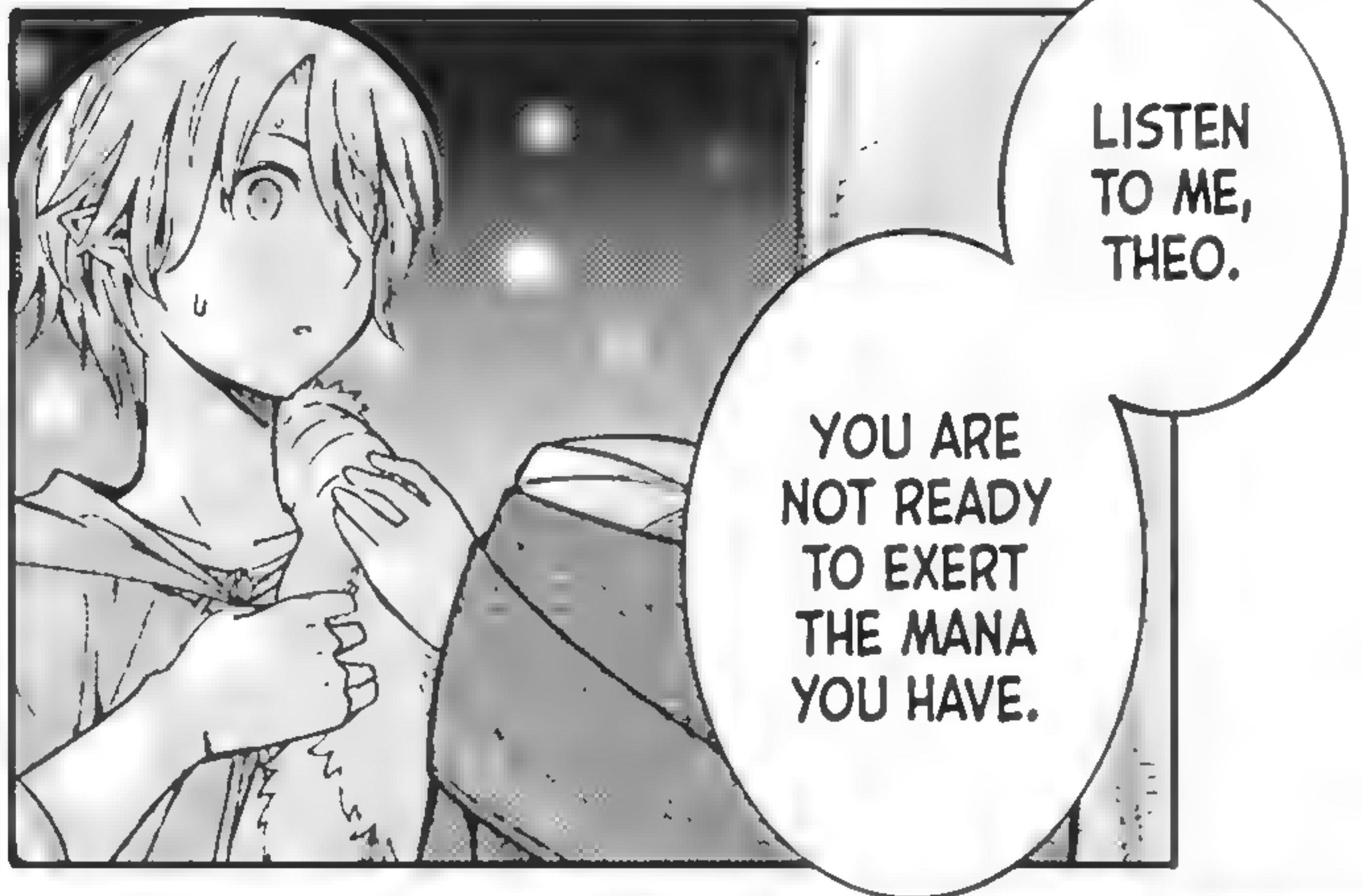


YOU  
LACK THE  
KNOWLEDGE  
NEEDED TO  
CONTROL IT.

ONE MISSTEP  
WOULD HAVE  
SPELLED YOUR  
DEMISE.



DID SHE  
STOP THE  
SPIRIT,  
TOO?

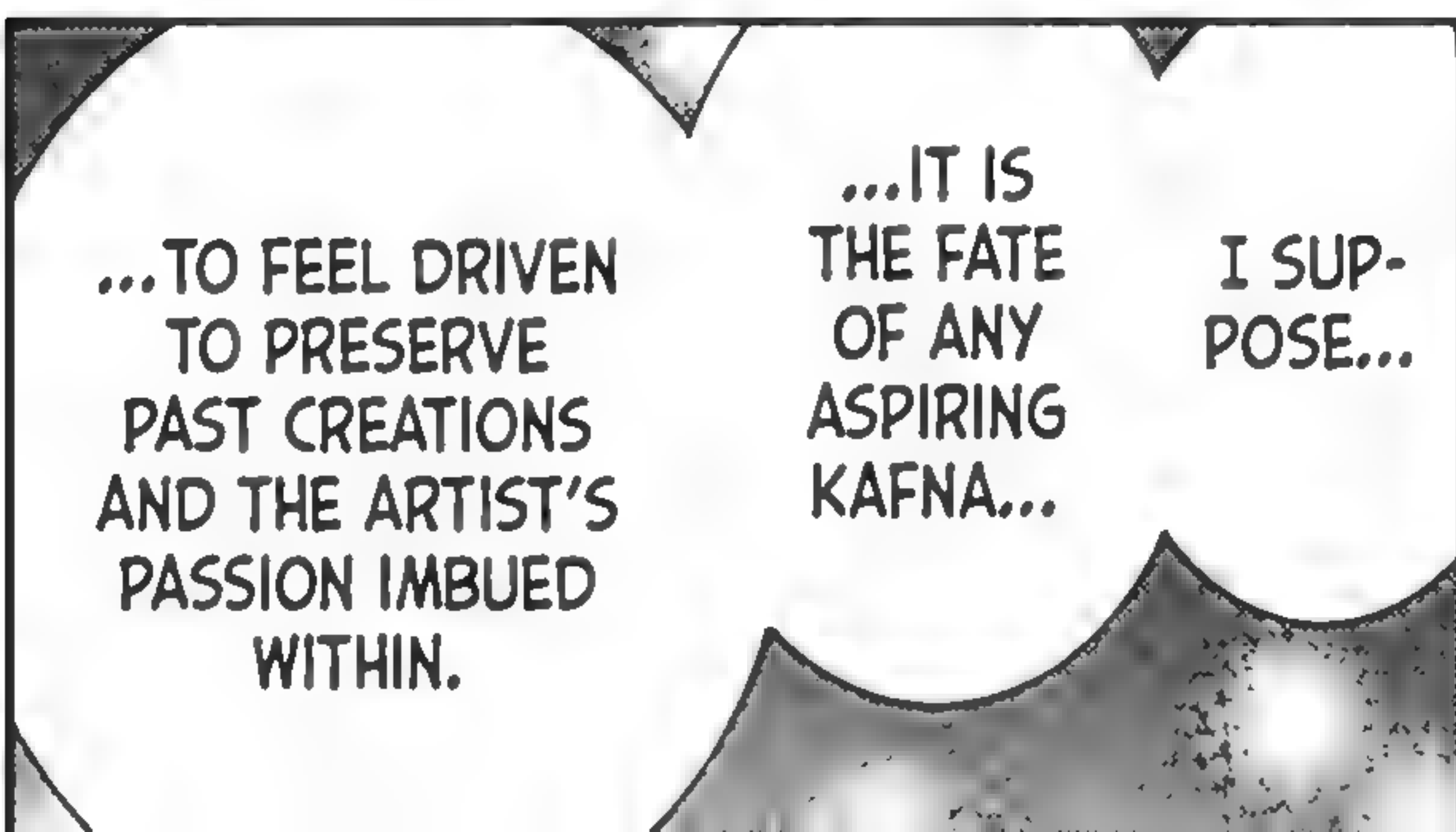


LISTEN  
TO ME,  
THEO.

YOU ARE  
NOT READY  
TO EXERT  
THE MANA  
YOU HAVE.



...YES,  
MA'AM.



...TO FEEL DRIVEN  
TO PRESERVE  
PAST CREATIONS  
AND THE ARTIST'S  
PASSION IMBUED  
WITHIN.

...IT IS  
THE FATE  
OF ANY  
ASPIRING  
KAFNA...

I SUP-  
POSE...



IF IT  
CRUMBLES,  
WE SHALL  
BUILD IT  
AGAIN.

DO NOT  
RISK YOUR  
LIFE OVER  
THAT WHICH  
MAY BE  
REPLACED.

THE STATUE  
IS MERELY  
STONE.





THEO...

...YOU HAVE  
MY THANKS  
FOR SEEING  
OUR DEAR  
MAGUS  
SAFE.



IT'S  
BECAUSE  
SHE'S...  
A CITL-  
APOL?!

...TO EXERCISE  
MORE CAUTION  
FROM NOW ON.

BUT DO  
TRY...

THEN  
HER  
HAIR  
ISN'T  
WHITE  
FROM  
AGE.

HER  
EYES...  
THEY'RE  
BRIGHT  
RED!



EEK!

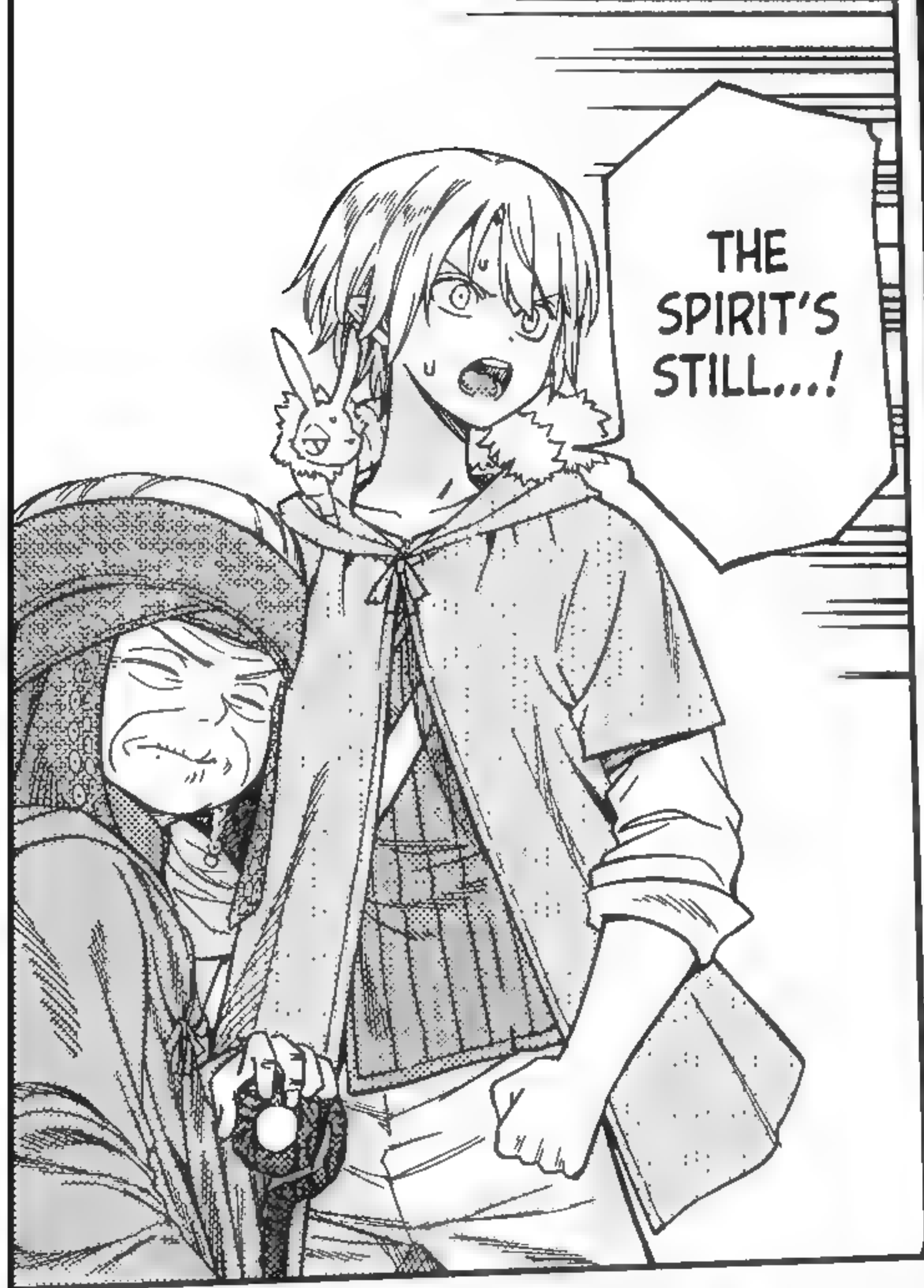
Y...

YOU  
MUST  
BE-

I'VE ONLY  
HEARD OF ONE  
TRANSMUTA-  
TIONIST...

...WHO'S  
ALSO A  
CITLAPOL.









WHOA!  
WHAT'S  
WITH THE  
STONE  
ARM?!



NOOO  
...

FOCUS. WE  
STILL DON'T  
KNOW IF  
THIS ONE  
WAS ACTING  
ALONE.

DON'T  
MAKE ME  
GO BACK  
INSIDE  
THE  
BOOK!

A WOOD  
MAGUS?!





...AND  
KEEPING  
IT LOCKED  
AWAY FOR  
ETERNITY...!

CREATING  
A LIFE THAT  
NEVER ASKED  
TO BE,  
DECIDING  
IT HAS NO  
USE...

IT'S  
INHUMANE...!



W  
A  
H  
H  
H  
!

OH, I  
WAS SO  
WORRIED  
...!



MOMMY  
?!

THERE  
YOU  
ARE!



NIAKO!

NIAKO!  
WHERE  
ARE  
YOU?!



THANK  
GOODNESS!  
I WAS SO  
WORRIED...!

I  
FOUND  
IT!



MOMMY,  
I...

...I  
DROPPED  
MY  
BOOK!!

IT'S ALL  
RIGHT,  
HONEY!  
LOOK!

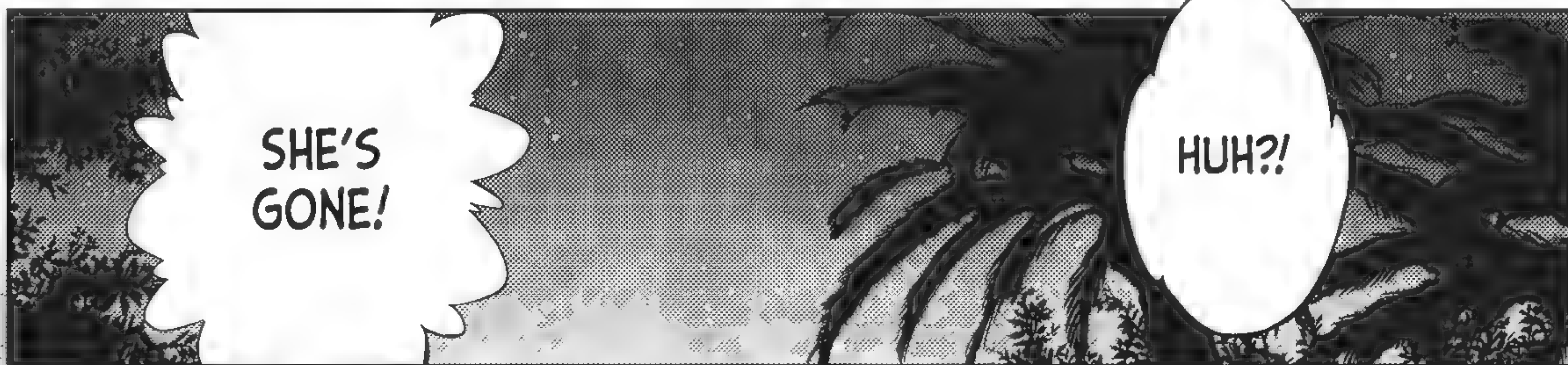




...AS  
I WAS  
SAYING  
...!

SO...

THINGS  
ALL  
WORKED  
OUT!



SHE'S  
GONE!

HUH?!



...WHEN MANA  
LIKE THAT  
WALKED INTO  
THE ROOM.

I MUST SAY...  
DURING THE  
INTERVIEWS  
TODAY...

...IT GAVE ME  
QUITE THE  
SHOCK...



CLK  
コッ

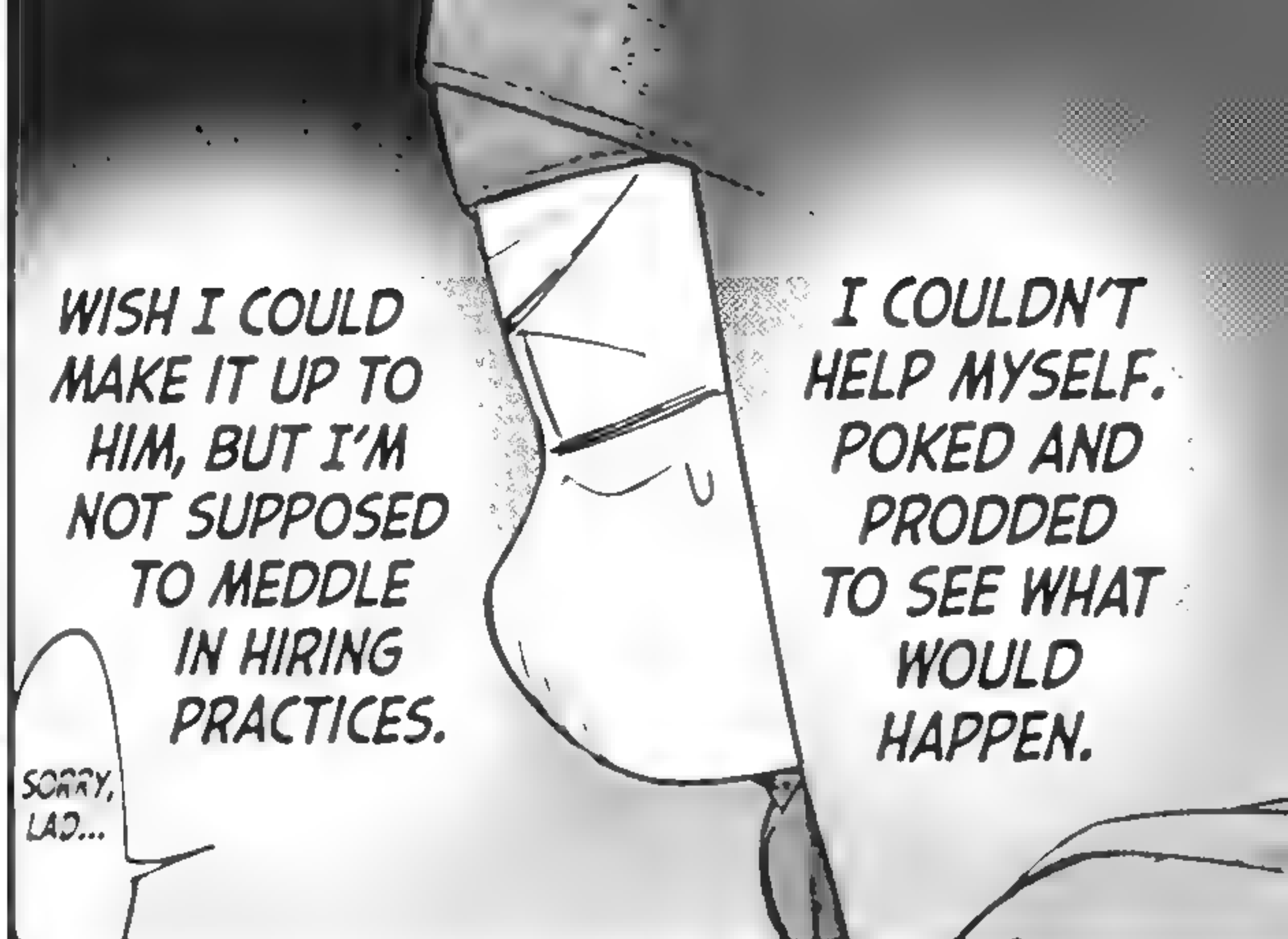
CLK  
コッ





WITH BOTH  
PEN AND  
BLADE IN  
HAND, HE  
COULD BE  
THE ONE WE  
NEED.

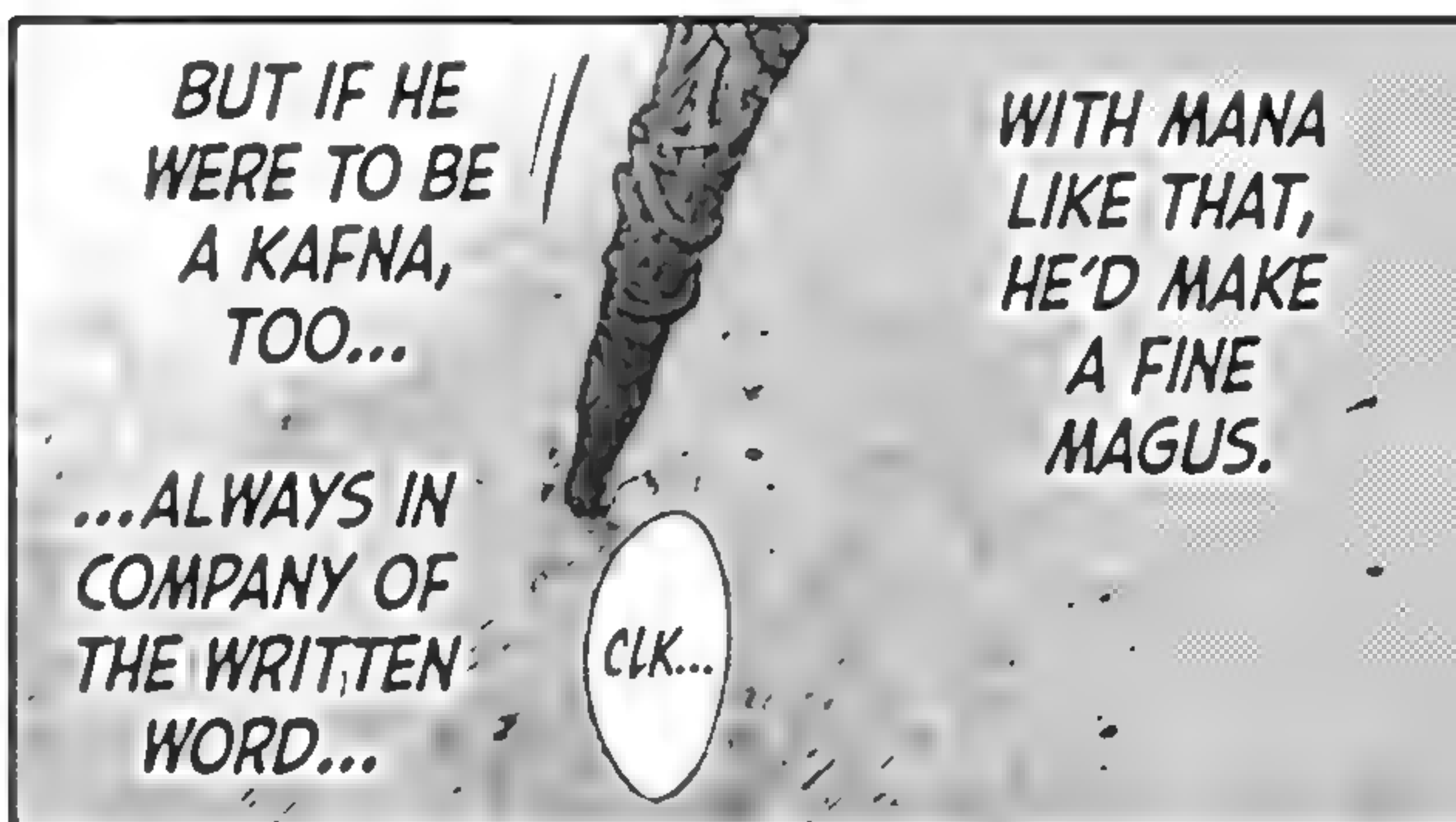
...HE'D HAVE  
BOTH KNOW-  
EDGE AND  
STRENGTH.



WISH I COULD  
MAKE IT UP TO  
HIM, BUT I'M  
NOT SUPPOSED  
TO MEDDLE  
IN HIRING  
PRACTICES.

SORRY,  
LAD...

I COULDN'T  
HELP MYSELF.  
POKED AND  
PRODDED  
TO SEE WHAT  
WOULD  
HAPPEN.



BUT IF HE  
WERE TO BE  
A KAFNA,  
TOO...

...ALWAYS IN  
COMPANY OF  
THE WRITTEN  
WORD...

CLK...

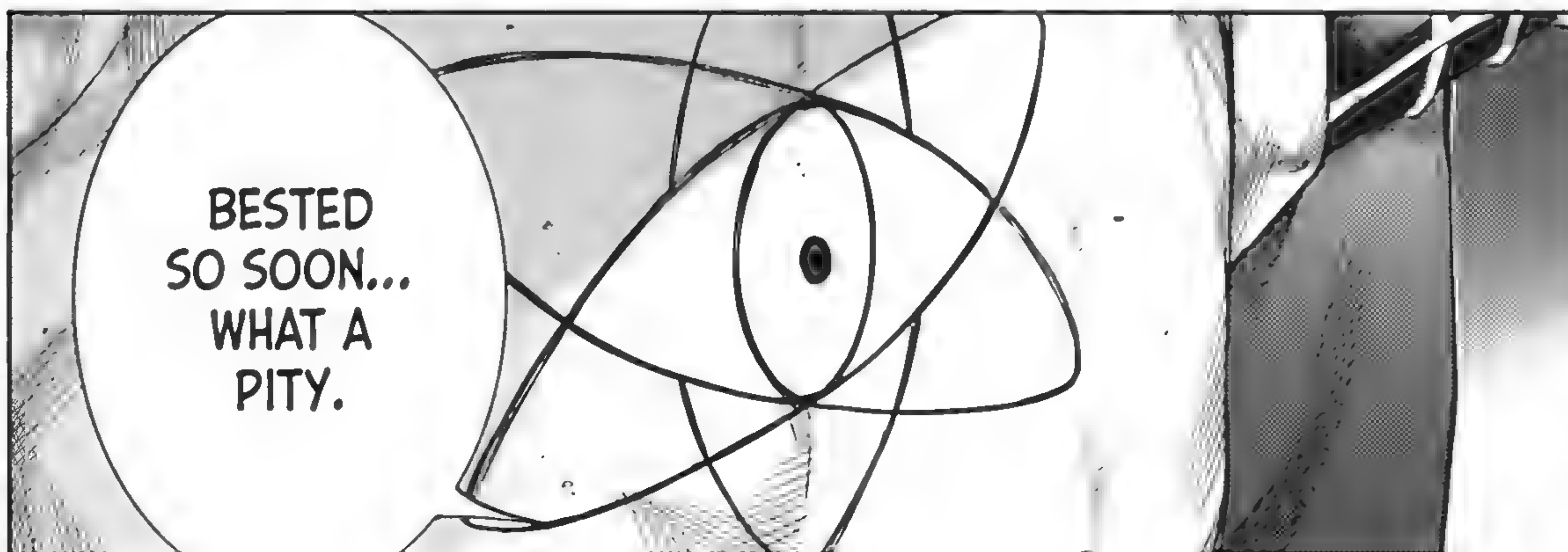
WITH MANA  
LIKE THAT,  
HE'D MAKE  
A FINE  
MAGUS.



YEAH. THE  
LIBRARY  
DISPATCHED  
SQUADS AND  
EVERYTHING!

REALLY  
?!

I HEARD  
SOMETHING  
BAD HAPPENING  
ALONG THE  
BOULEVARD!

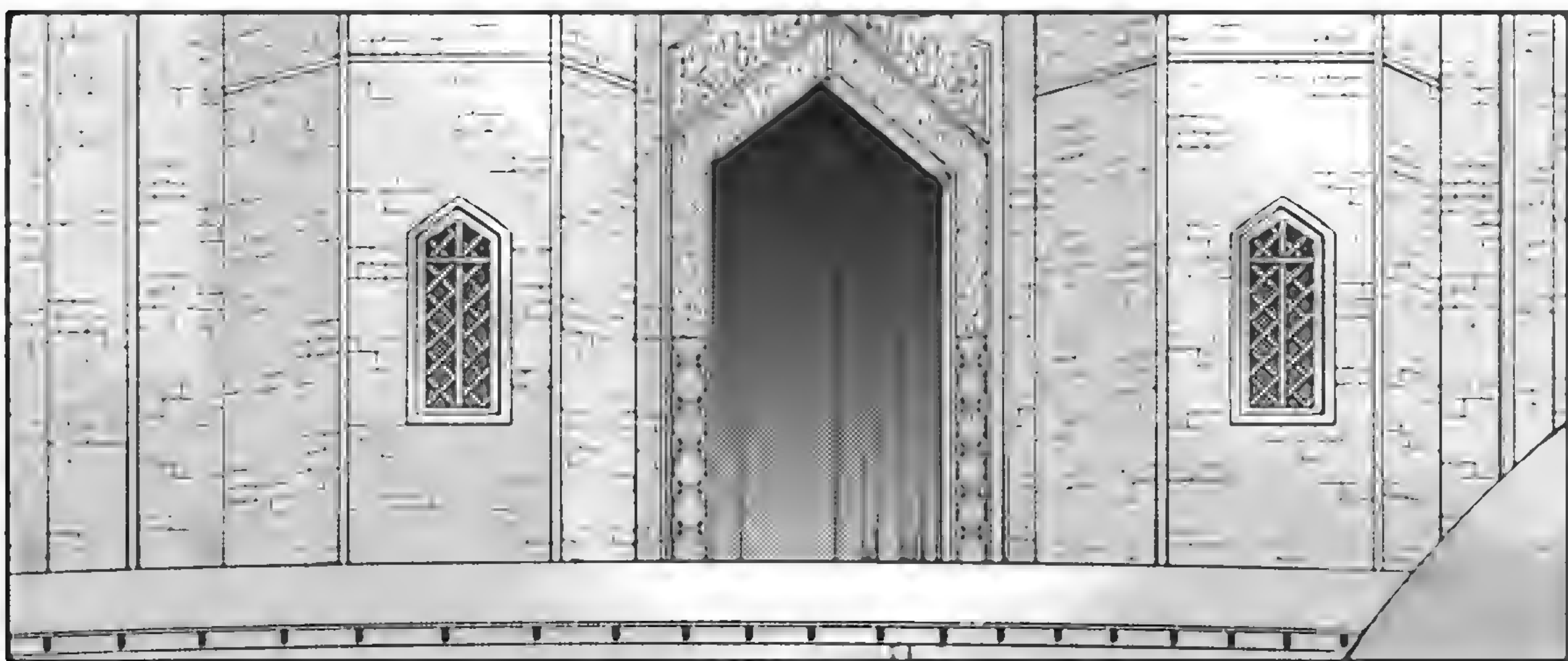


BESTED  
SO SOON...  
WHAT A  
PITY.

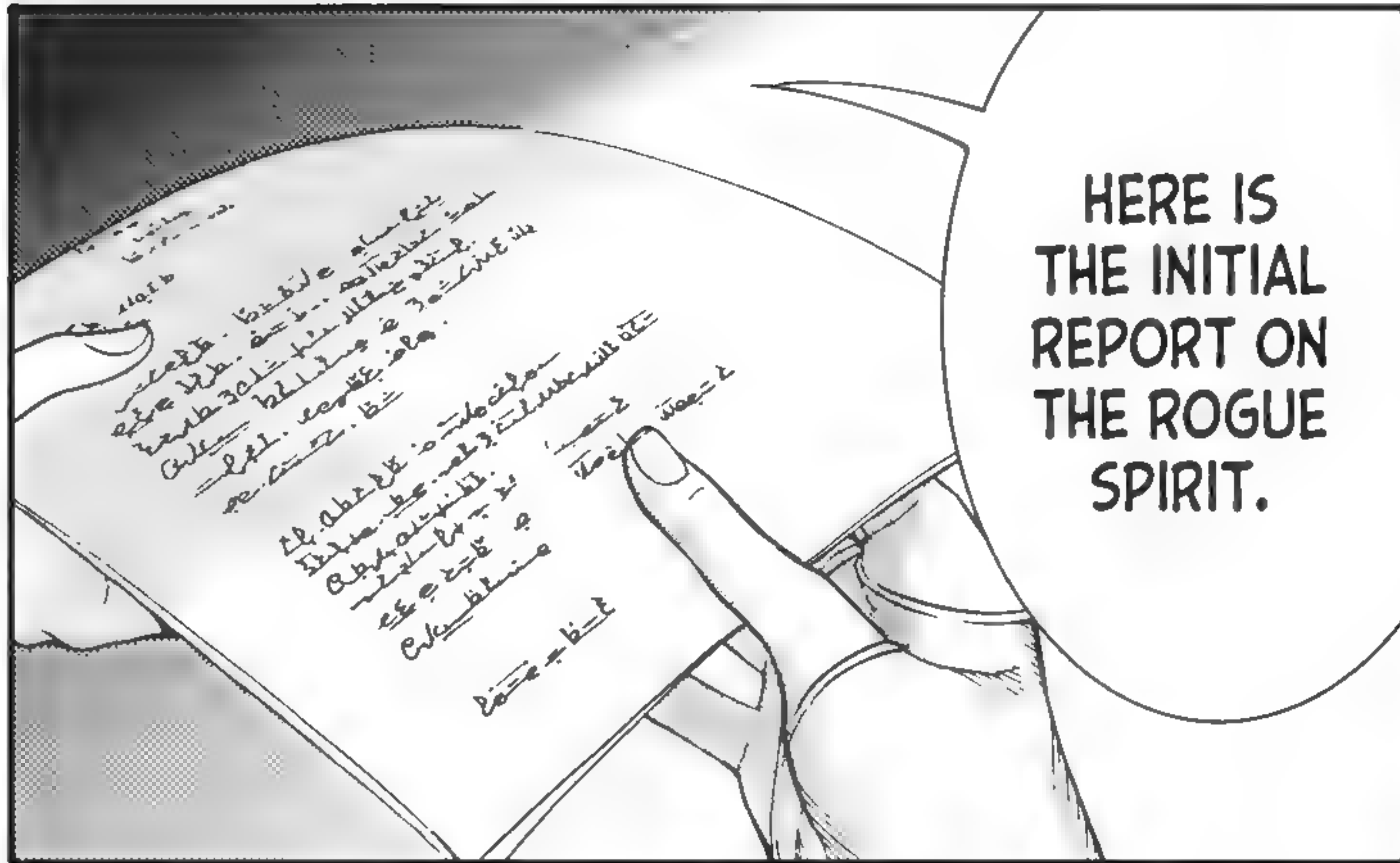




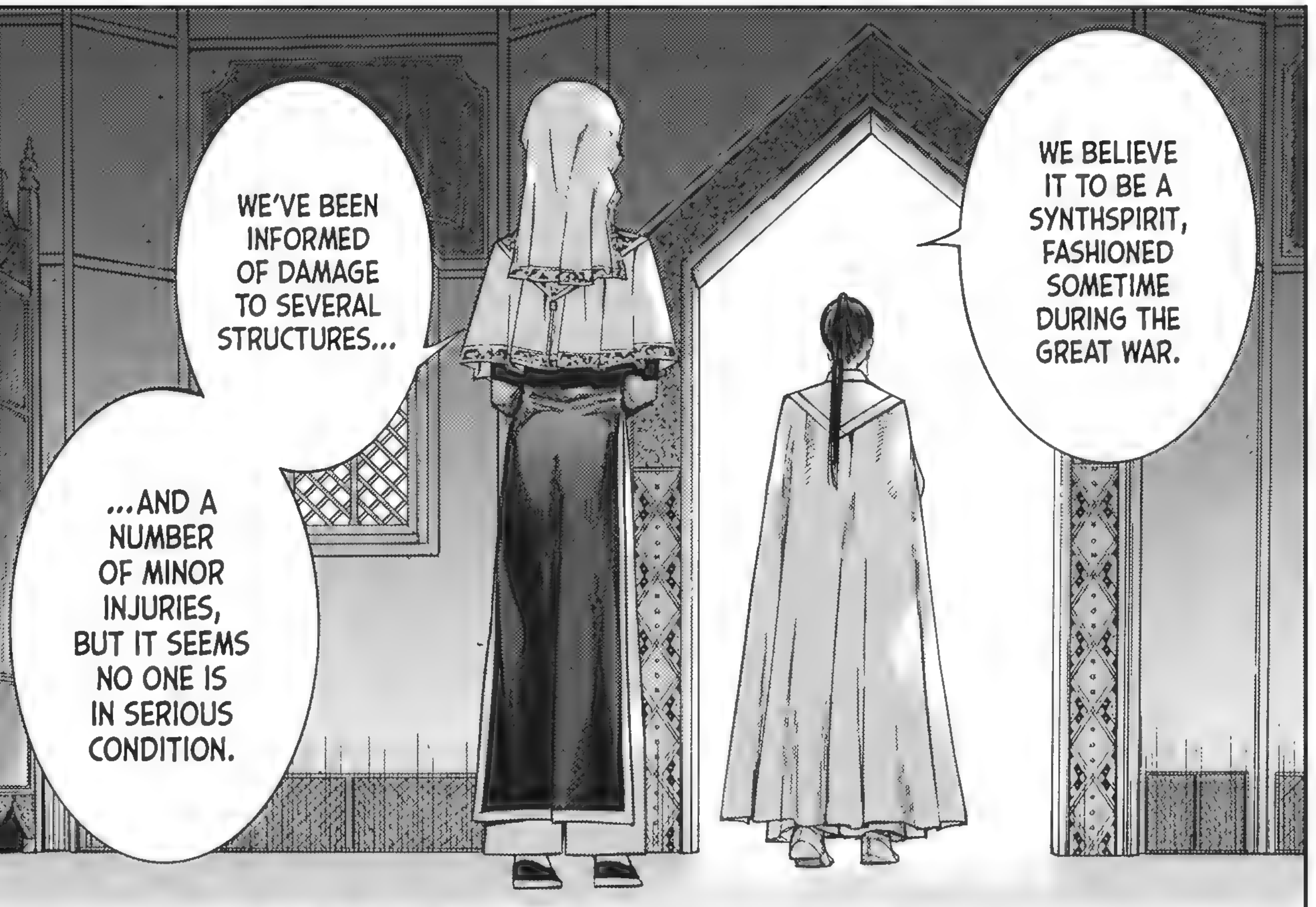
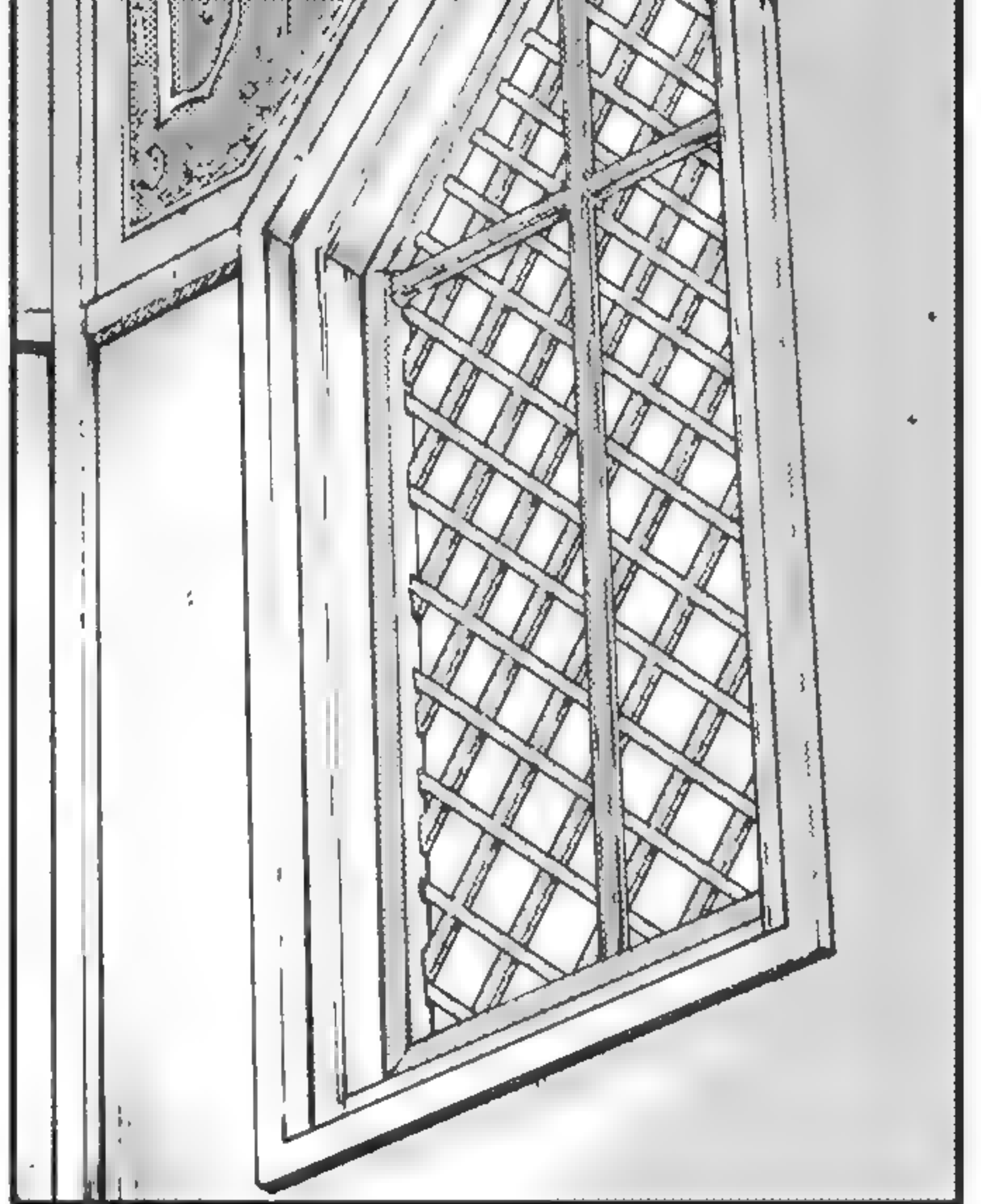








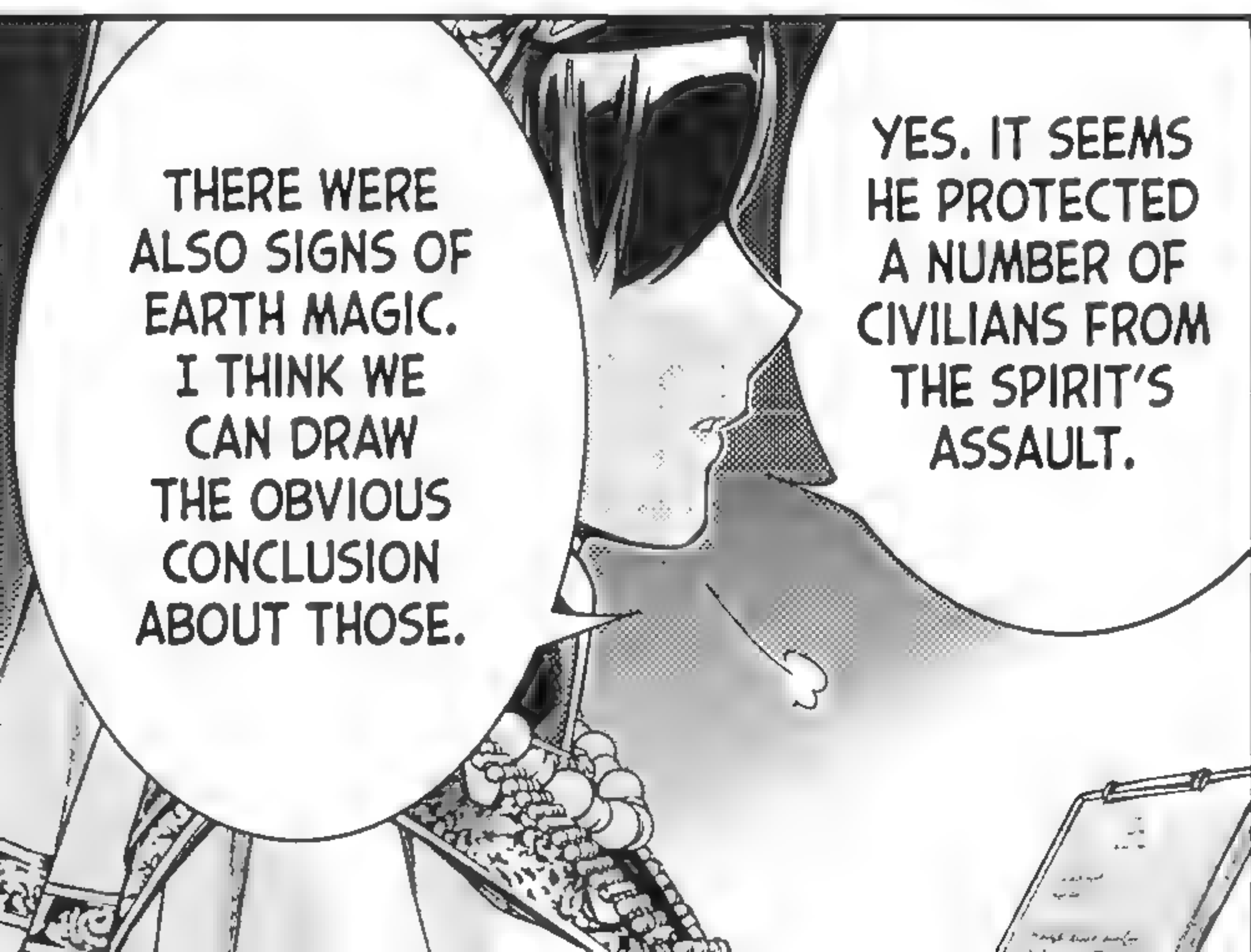
HERE IS  
THE INITIAL  
REPORT ON  
THE ROGUE  
SPIRIT.



WE'VE BEEN  
INFORMED  
OF DAMAGE  
TO SEVERAL  
STRUCTURES...

WE BELIEVE  
IT TO BE A  
SYNTHSPIRIT,  
FASHIONED  
SOMETIME  
DURING THE  
GREAT WAR.

...AND A  
NUMBER  
OF MINOR  
INJURIES,  
BUT IT SEEMS  
NO ONE IS  
IN SERIOUS  
CONDITION.



THERE WERE  
ALSO SIGNS OF  
EARTH MAGIC.  
I THINK WE  
CAN DRAW  
THE OBVIOUS  
CONCLUSION  
ABOUT THOSE.

YES. IT SEEMS  
HE PROTECTED  
A NUMBER OF  
CIVILIANS FROM  
THE SPIRIT'S  
ASSAULT.



A HALF-  
HAUPI BOY,  
HM?





YOU'VE  
COME AT  
LAST!

THEO!

THE ENFORCER  
TWELFTH SEAT OF THE SAGES  
SEDONA BLEU





SUCH IS  
THE POWER  
OF JOY  
PREMATURE!

WHY QUELL  
A HEART'S  
DELIGHTFUL  
FLUTTERING  
WHEN ONE  
COULD ENJOY  
IT INSTEAD?!

UM...  
RIGHT.

As  
weird  
as  
ever...



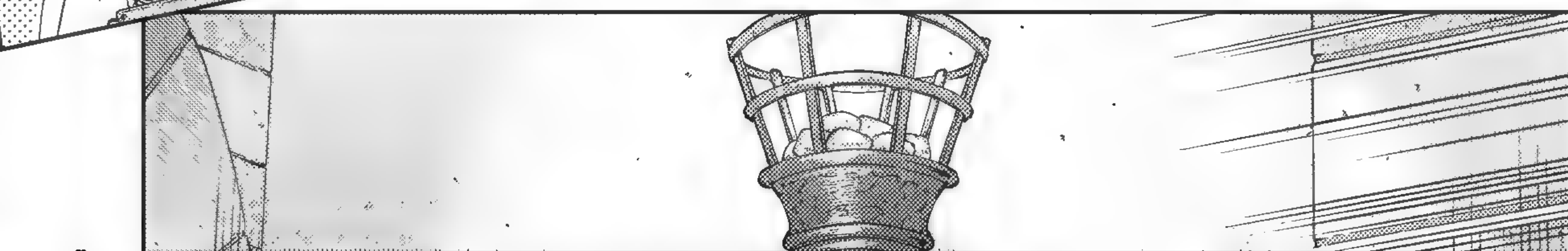
I'M NOT  
CERTAIN WE  
HAVE ENOUGH  
INFORMATION  
TO DRAW  
CONCLU-  
SIONS.

YOU  
BELIEVE  
YOU MIGHT  
KNOW THIS  
BOY?



IF PROVEN  
WRONG, I  
SHALL SIMPLY  
EXPRESS MY  
CHAGRIN!

...THOUGH I'LL  
ADMIT AMITY  
CHILDREN WITH  
HAUPI BLOOD  
ARE QUITE  
UNCOMMON.



WE'RE NOT CERTAIN,  
MA'AM. BASED ON  
THE DISTURBANCE  
REPORT, SHE MUST  
HAVE ENCOUNTERED  
THE SPIRIT...

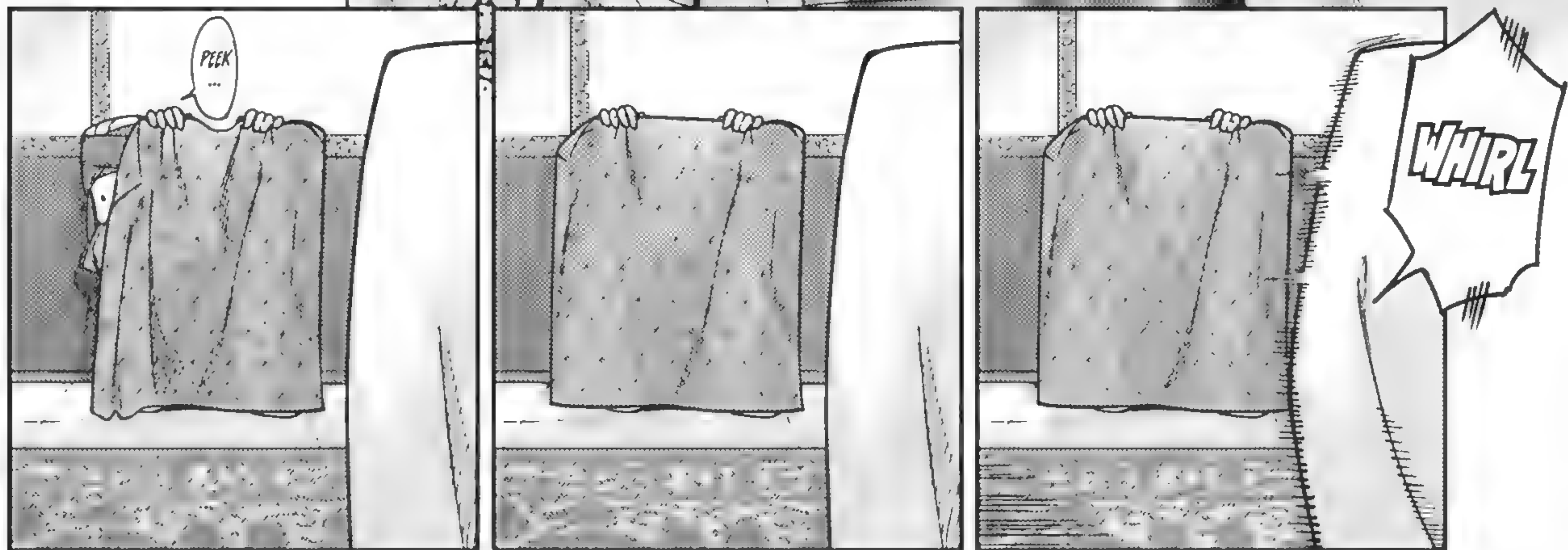
...BUT WE  
HAVEN'T HAD  
WORD OF  
ANY VISUAL  
CONTACT  
SINCE--

WHERE  
IS SHE?!

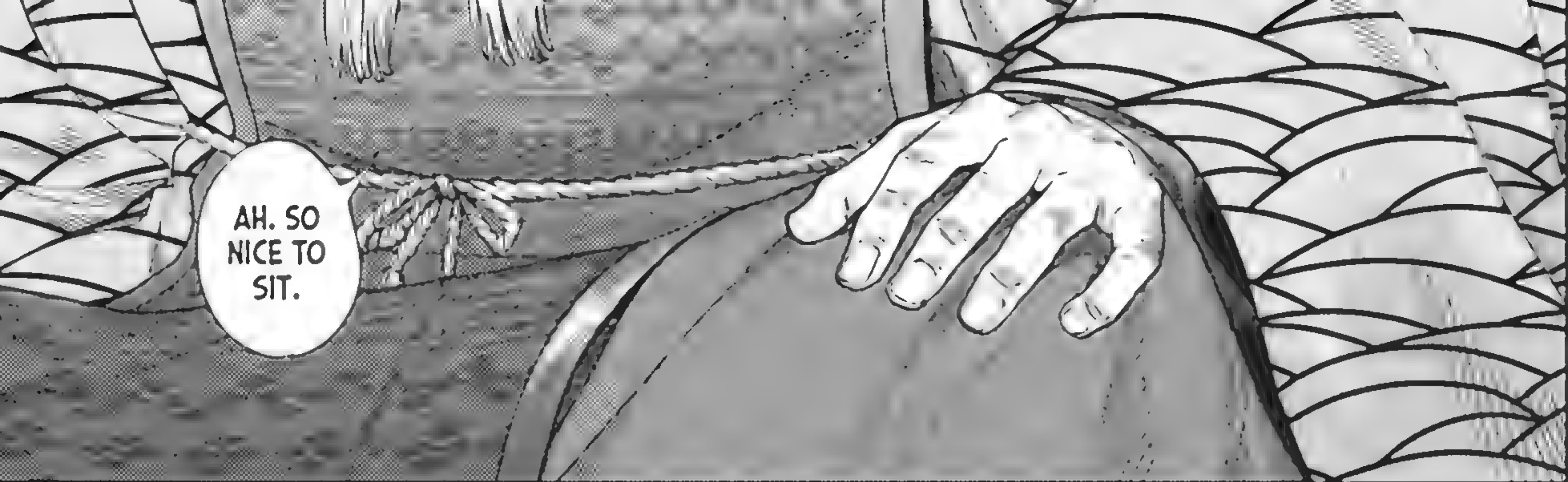




THE DECREEER  
FIRST SEAT OF THE SAGES  
**TAKSHA CUPUL**







AH. SO  
NICE TO  
SIT.



GENERAL REPRESENTATIVE,  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

KOMAKO KAULIKK





CAN YOU IMAGINE  
THE UPROAR IF THE  
GREAT MAGUS OF  
THE LIBRARY WAS  
FOUND COLLAPSED  
ON SOME CITY  
STREET?

HOW MANY TIMES  
DO I HAVE TO TELL  
YOU? IF YOU INSIST  
ON WALKS, AT LEAST  
TAKE A *GUARD*!



...IT ALLOWS  
FOR SUCH  
FASCINATING  
ENCOUNTERS.

NOT TO  
MENTION...



WALK WITH AN  
ENTOURAGE?  
EVERY CITIZEN  
WOULD BE  
BOWING AND  
GAPING AS I  
PASSED.

NO. I  
PREFER TO  
OBSERVE  
THE CITY  
IN ITS  
NATURAL  
STATE.



HAVE SOME  
CONSIDERATION  
FOR THE  
ADULTS WHOSE  
LIVES YOU'RE  
COMPLICATING.

ESTEEMED  
NOBILITY  
DRESSED IN  
RAGS AND  
MINGLING  
AMONG THE  
COMMON-  
ERS.

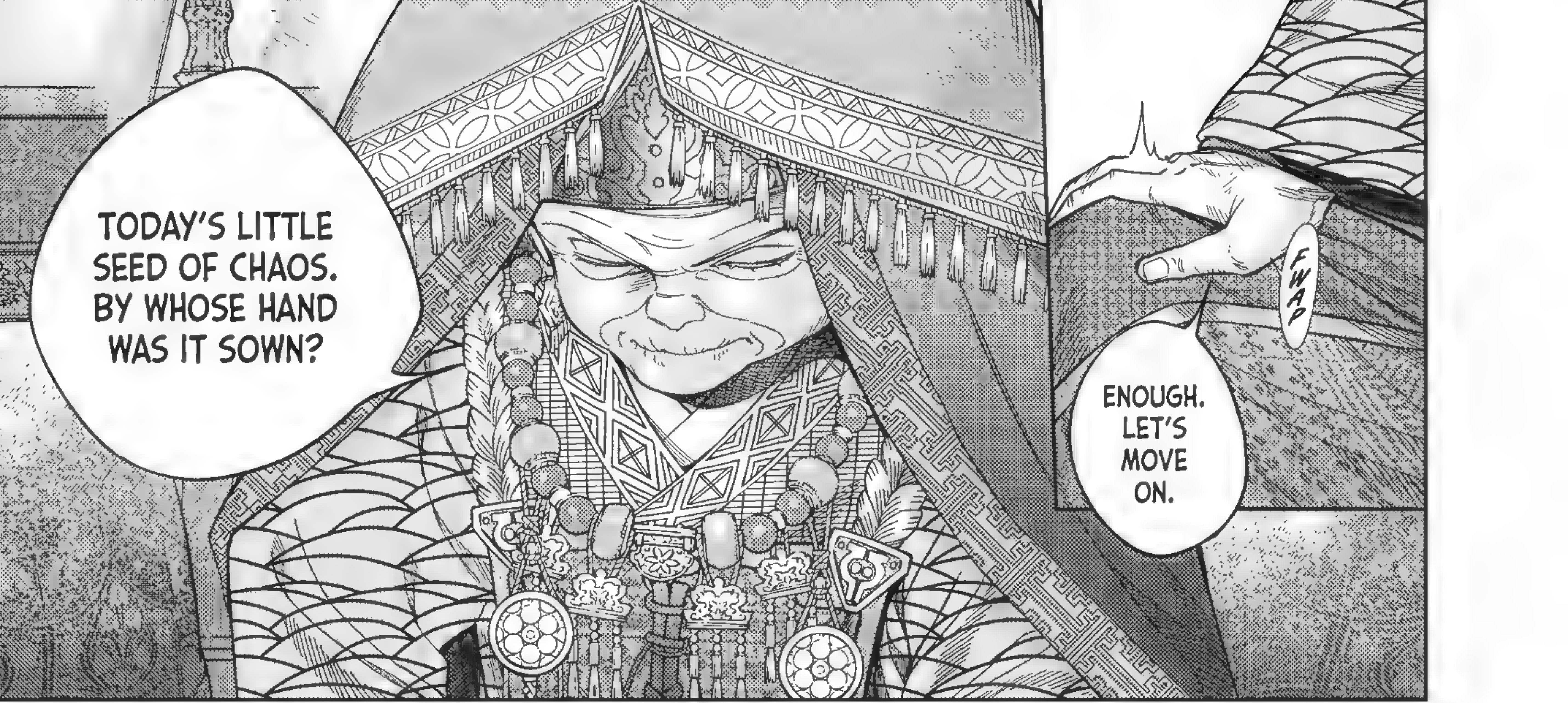
COULD YOU  
PLEASE LEAVE  
THAT SORT OF  
THING TO THE  
FAIRYTALES?!



ACTING  
HIGH AND  
MIGHTY  
IS YOUR  
JOB!


COME,  
NOW. IT'S  
EXHAUSTING  
ACTING HIGH  
AND MIGHTY  
ALL DAY.





TODAY'S LITTLE  
SEED OF CHAOS.  
BY WHOSE HAND  
WAS IT SOWN?

ENOUGH.  
LET'S  
MOVE  
ON.



...BUT WE HAVE  
NOTHING SO FAR.  
IT'S QUITE UNLIKE  
THE ACTIONS  
OF ANY OF THE  
LIBRARY'S KNOWN  
OPPONENTS.


THE  
PROTECTIONS  
OFFICE IS  
LOOKING  
INTO IT...




...OF A  
NEW AND  
FORMIDABLE  
FORCE.

THIS  
COULD BE  
THE FIRST  
STIR-  
RINGS...

HARD TO  
FATHOM WHY  
IT WOULD  
BE USED  
SO FRIVO-  
LOUSLY.



THE HOSTILE  
WAS A MID-TIER  
SYNTHSPIRIT. BUT IT  
SEEMED TO TAUNT  
MORE THAN ATTACK.  
FEW GRIMOIRES OF  
THAT CALIBER WOULD  
STILL EXIST OUTSIDE  
OF OUR CONTROL.



SOMEONE  
WANTS US  
TO KNOW HE  
CAN AFFORD  
TO WASTE  
A SPIRIT  
OF THAT  
CALIBER.

HMPH. PERHAPS  
WHOEVER DID  
THIS WISHED TO  
IMPLY ACCESS  
TO A GREATER  
ARSENAL.





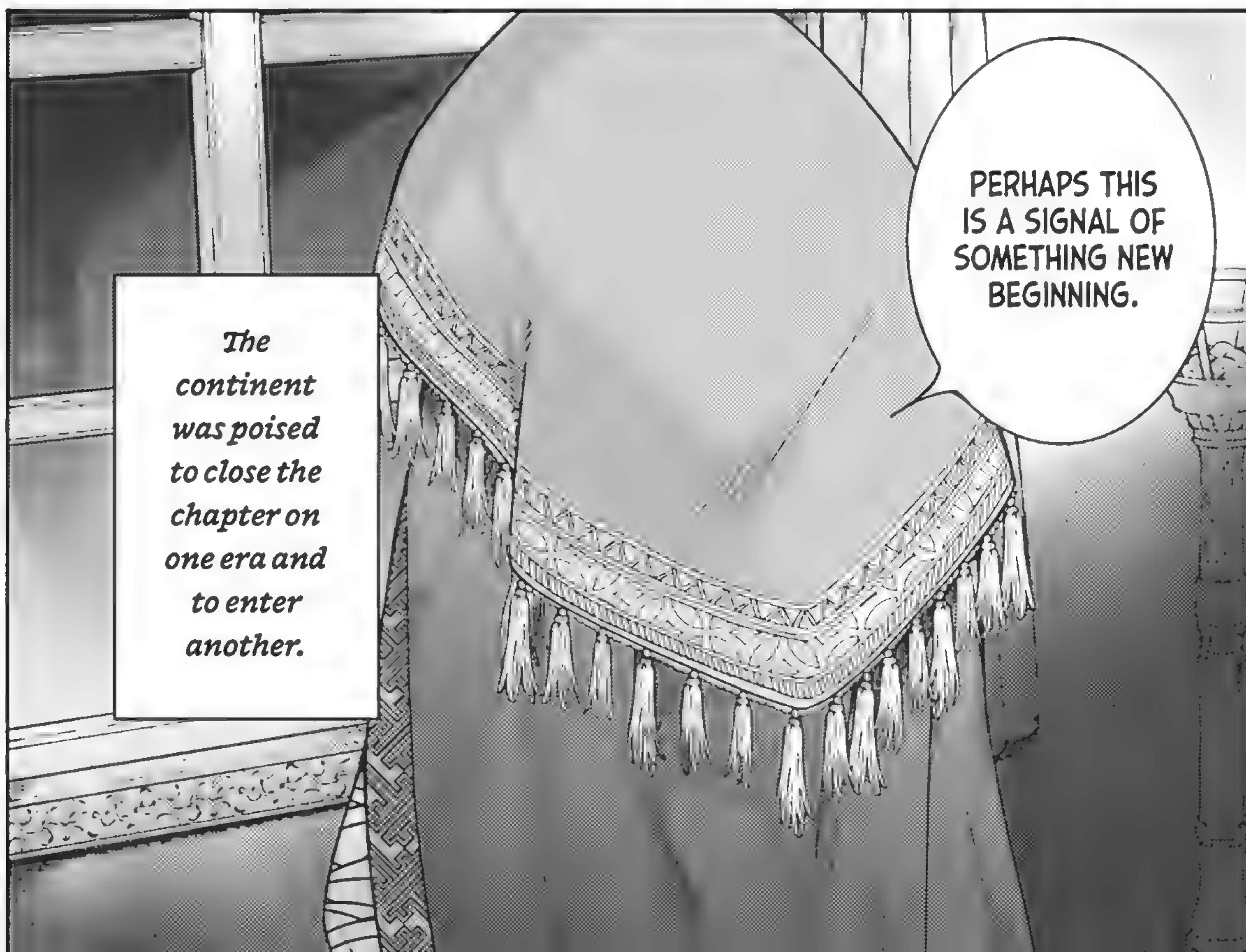
...THAT IT IS UNRELATED, BUT MASTER KIN HAS ANNOUNCED INTENT TO FULLY WITHDRAW FROM THE POLITICAL SPHERE OF RAKTA.

THERE IS ANOTHER MATTER. I DEEPLY HOPE...



SEEMS THE ONLY ONE LEFT SITTING HIGH AND MIGHTY IS ME.


THE MAGUS OF THE ALMANAC HAS FINALLY RETIRED, HM?



*The continent was poised to close the chapter on one era and to enter another.*

PERHAPS THIS IS A SIGNAL OF SOMETHING NEW BEGINNING.





*Since ages  
long past, its  
bounty has  
fostered the  
rise of many  
peoples.*

*The  
Atlatonan  
Conti-  
nent—*

*Yet with the  
arrival of the  
Emissary of  
Wormwood,  
it faced  
crisis unlike  
anything  
before.*

*...and those  
robbed grew  
aggressive.  
Battles raged  
across the  
continent—  
desperate  
attempts  
to secure  
territory to  
survive.*

*Collec-  
tively, the  
skirmishes  
were known  
as the Great  
War of the  
Races.*

*Many races  
lost their  
homes to  
the Ashen  
Death...*

*Though each race  
still harbored deep  
strains of discontent,  
the armistice was a  
great victory born of  
the heroes' influence  
and the bonds they  
shared.*

*...on a crucial  
conference, winning  
an agreement among  
all that the remaining  
inhabitable land  
would be divided into  
Seven Autonomous  
Regions, and finally  
bringing end to  
the war.*

*The selfsame  
magi who  
drove away  
the Emissary  
banded  
together  
once more.  
They staked  
everything...*



*The reins  
of history  
must be  
relinquished  
to a new  
generation.*

*The great magi  
who once saved  
the world are  
now old and  
weary.*

*Since  
that day,  
95 years  
have  
passed.*

*Among  
each of the  
races...*

*...new  
leaders  
now rise.*

トート

アサ

道華

ニハ

Kalafa

سل

シ

*And unlike the magi of old, they share  
no bonds formed of suffering together  
endured.*

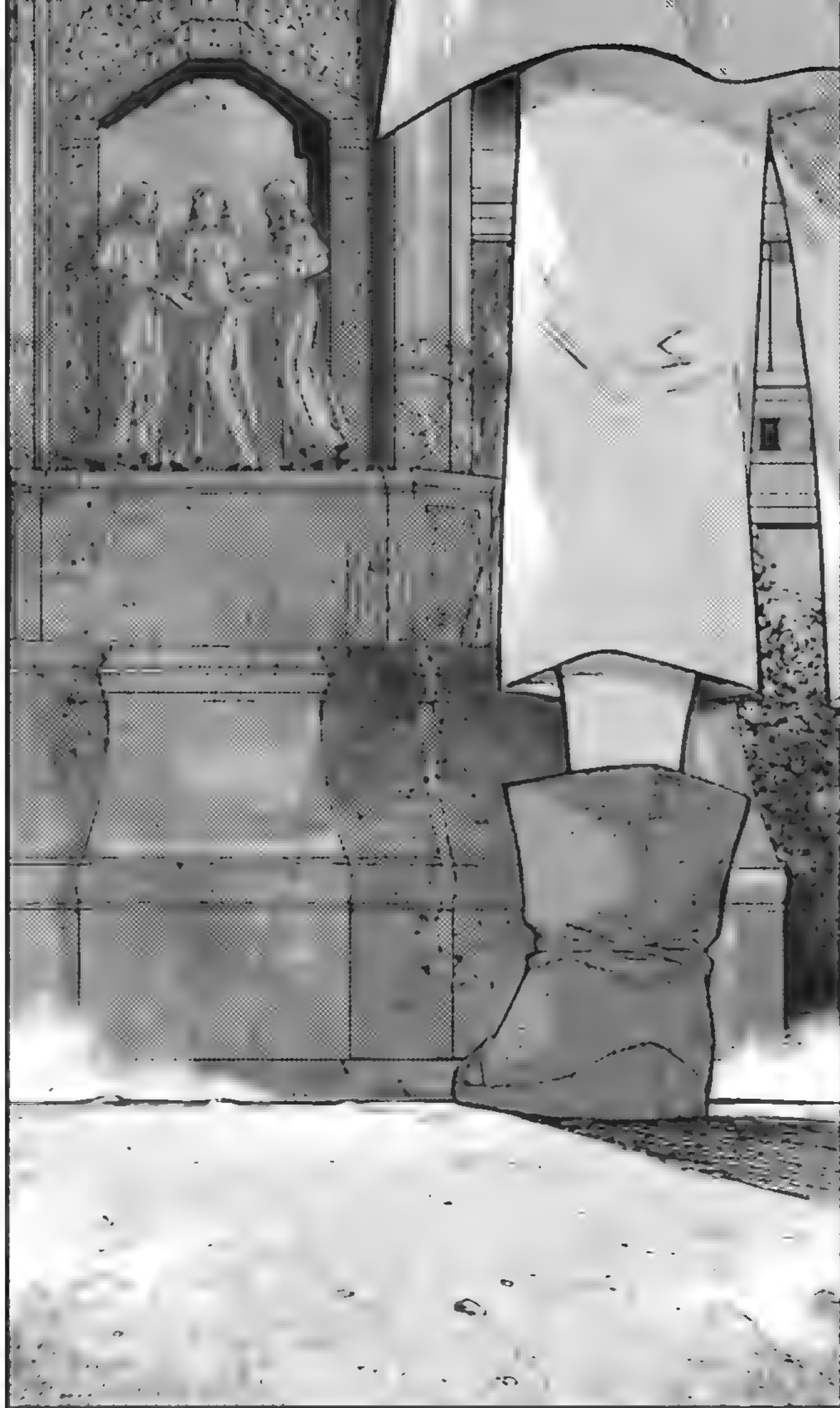




WHEN MY TIME  
COMES, TOO,  
AND ALL OF  
THE SEVEN  
HAVE BEEN  
SUCCEEDED...

...THE NEW  
LEADERS WILL  
LABOR NOT FOR  
HARMONY. EACH  
WILL ACT IN THE  
INTEREST OF THEIR  
RACE, AND THEIR  
RACE ALONE.





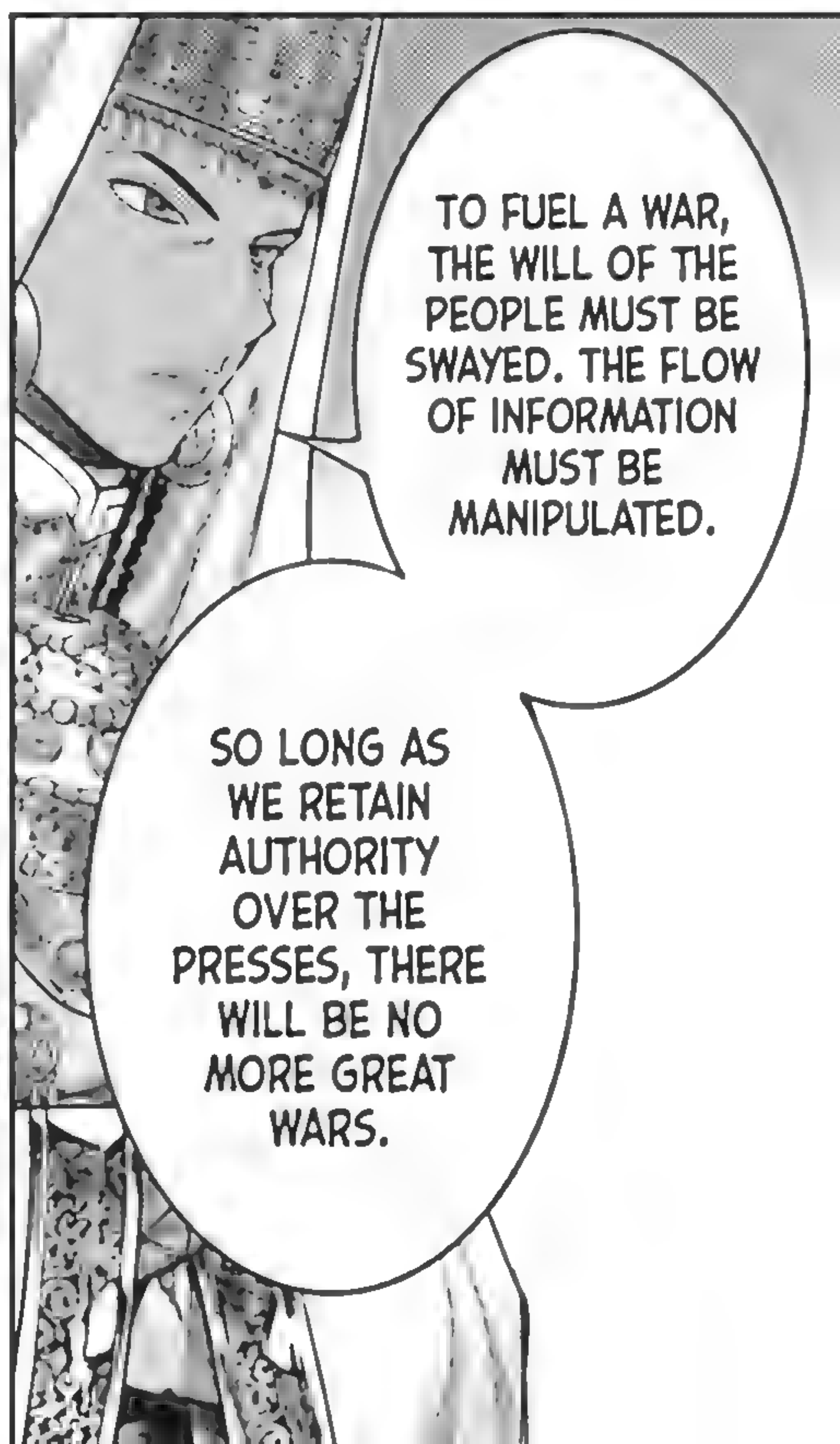
WHAT WE  
NEED IS  
A LINK.

SOMEONE  
WHO CAN  
RALLY THE  
HEARTS  
OF ALL  
AS ONE.



NO. WAR IS  
SOMETHING  
WE CAN  
ONLY  
DELAY.

IF NOTHING  
CHANGES, IT  
WILL RAGE  
ONCE MORE.



TO FUEL A WAR,  
THE WILL OF THE  
PEOPLE MUST BE  
SWAYED. THE FLOW  
OF INFORMATION  
MUST BE  
MANIPULATED.

SO LONG AS  
WE RETAIN  
AUTHORITY  
OVER THE  
PRESSES, THERE  
WILL BE NO  
MORE GREAT  
WARS.





AND THAT  
LINK...

...WILL NOT  
BE ONE OF MY  
GENERATION,  
NOR YOURS.

HE WILL  
APPEAR FROM  
AMONG THE  
YOUNG.



KOMAKO  
KAULIKK.

O GREAT  
MAGUS  
OF THE  
LIBRARY.



...A BOY  
ASKED  
ME WHAT  
I DREAM  
OF.

EARLIER  
TODAY...



FEW WOULD  
ASK AN OLD  
WOMAN OF  
THE FUTURE  
SHE WISHES  
TO SEE.

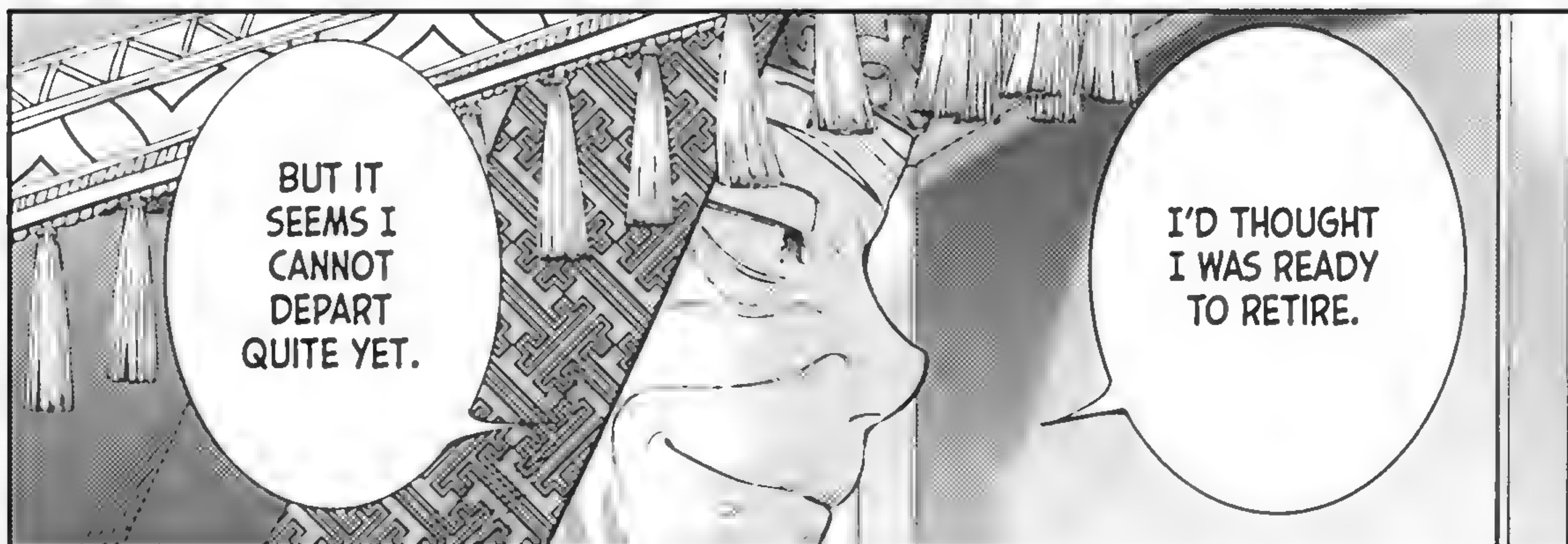
QUITE  
CURIOUS,  
DON'T YOU  
THINK?



I DIDN'T  
MAKE  
IT THIS  
TIME.

BUT I  
PROMISE  
YOU,  
I WILL  
RETURN.





BUT IT  
SEEMS I  
CANNOT  
DEPART  
QUITE YET.

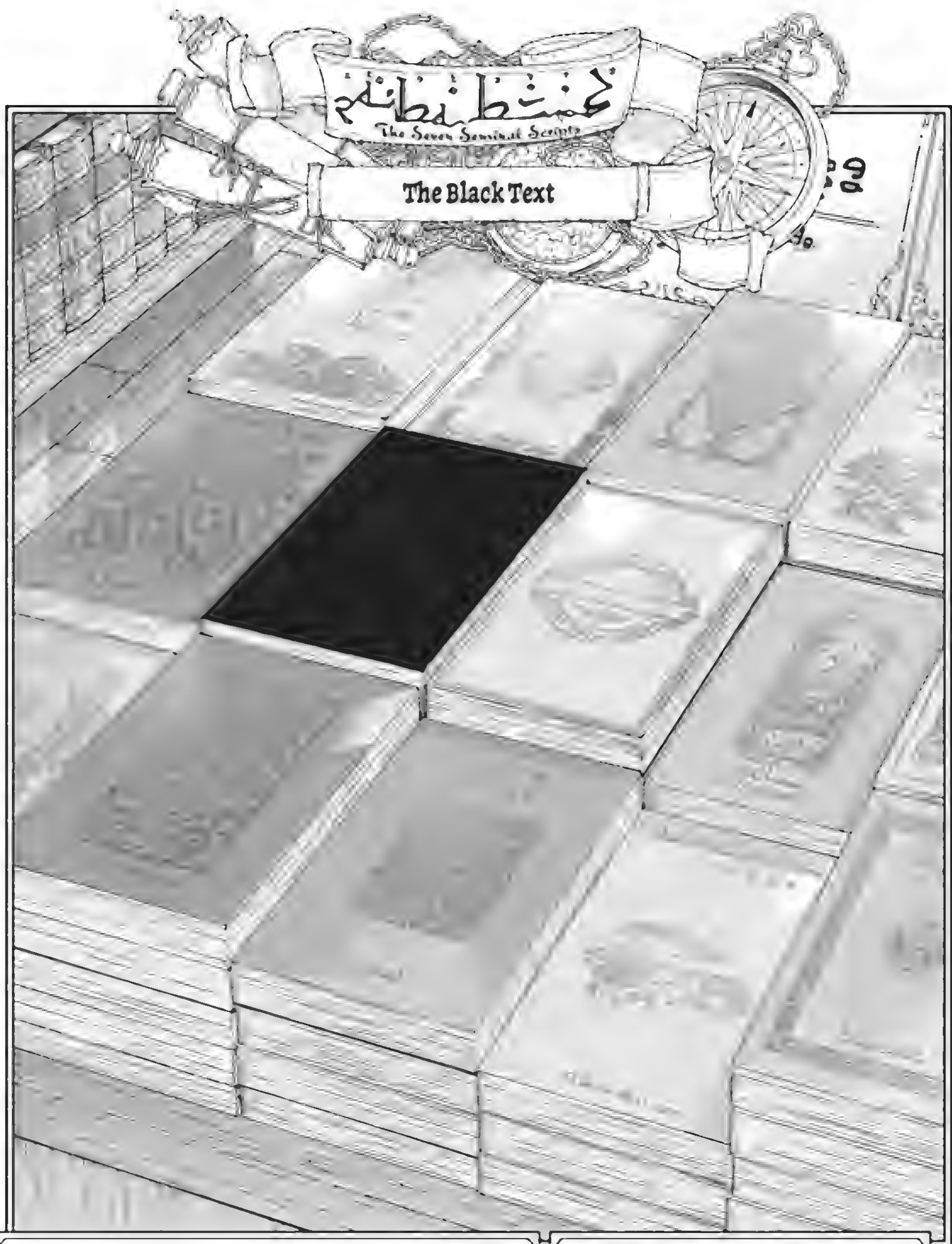
I'D THOUGHT  
I WAS READY  
TO RETIRE.



YOU WOULD  
HAVE ADMIRERD  
HIS EYES...

...AND THE  
CLEAR, CRIMSON  
FLAME BURNING  
DEEP WITHIN.





[Author] Lugei Noir

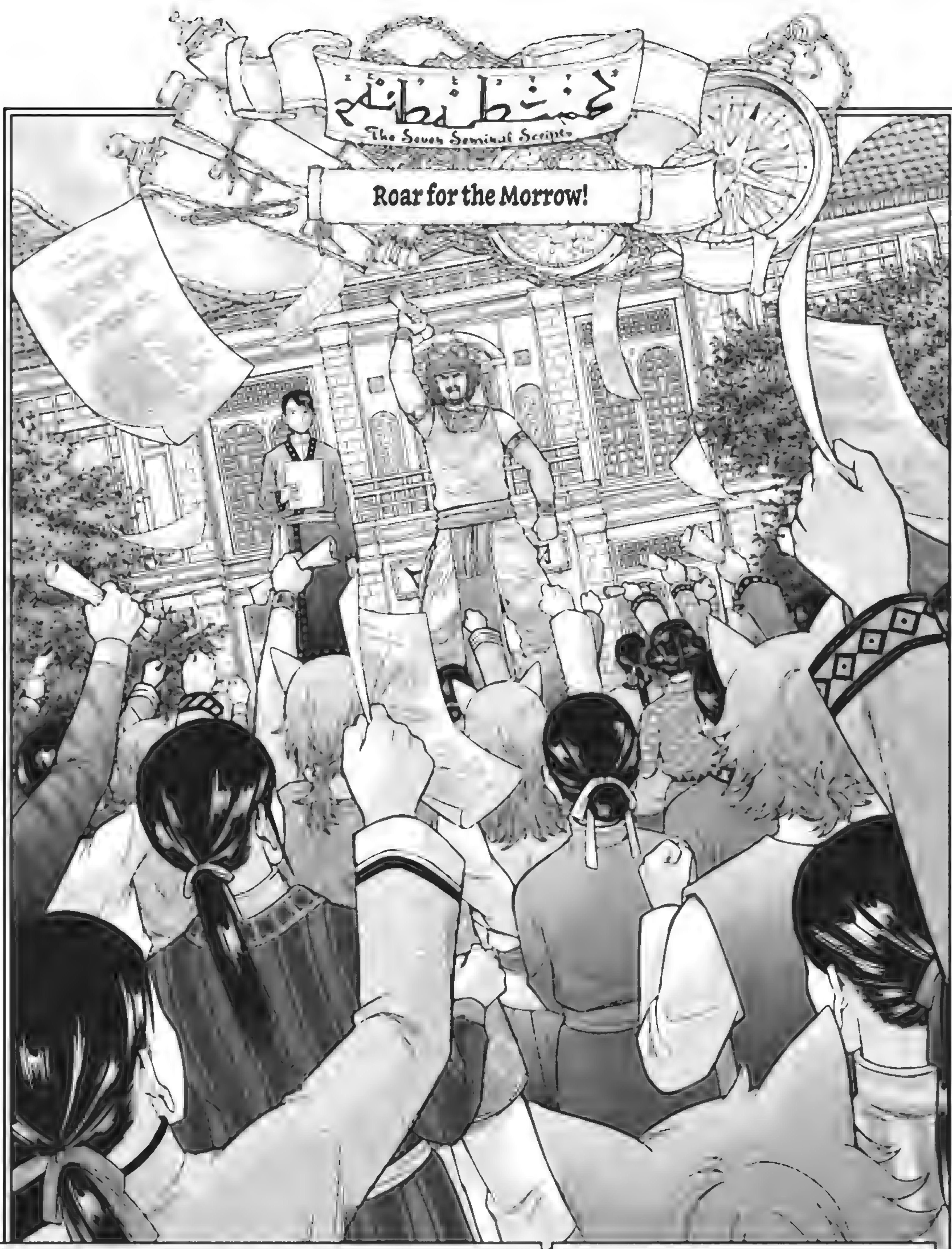
[Date] 145 Years Ago

One of the Seven Seminal Scripts.

A book that endeavors to present an academic argument that the  
Haupi are an inferior race.

Later research would refute the vast majority of the assertions made as mere  
sophistry, but at the time of the *Black Text*'s publication, there were many who were  
swayed by its words. Fueled by these thoughts, and amid the chaos in the aftermath of  
the Emissary's attack, the Hyron began a mass slaughter of the Haupi.  
It was this book that drove the Central Library to establish its current framework for  
inspecting and supervising all the continent's texts, for the *Black Text* is said to have  
killed far more people than the spells of any grimoire.





[Author] Greyble d'Verbois

[Date] 121 Years Ago

**One of the Seven Seminal Scripts.**

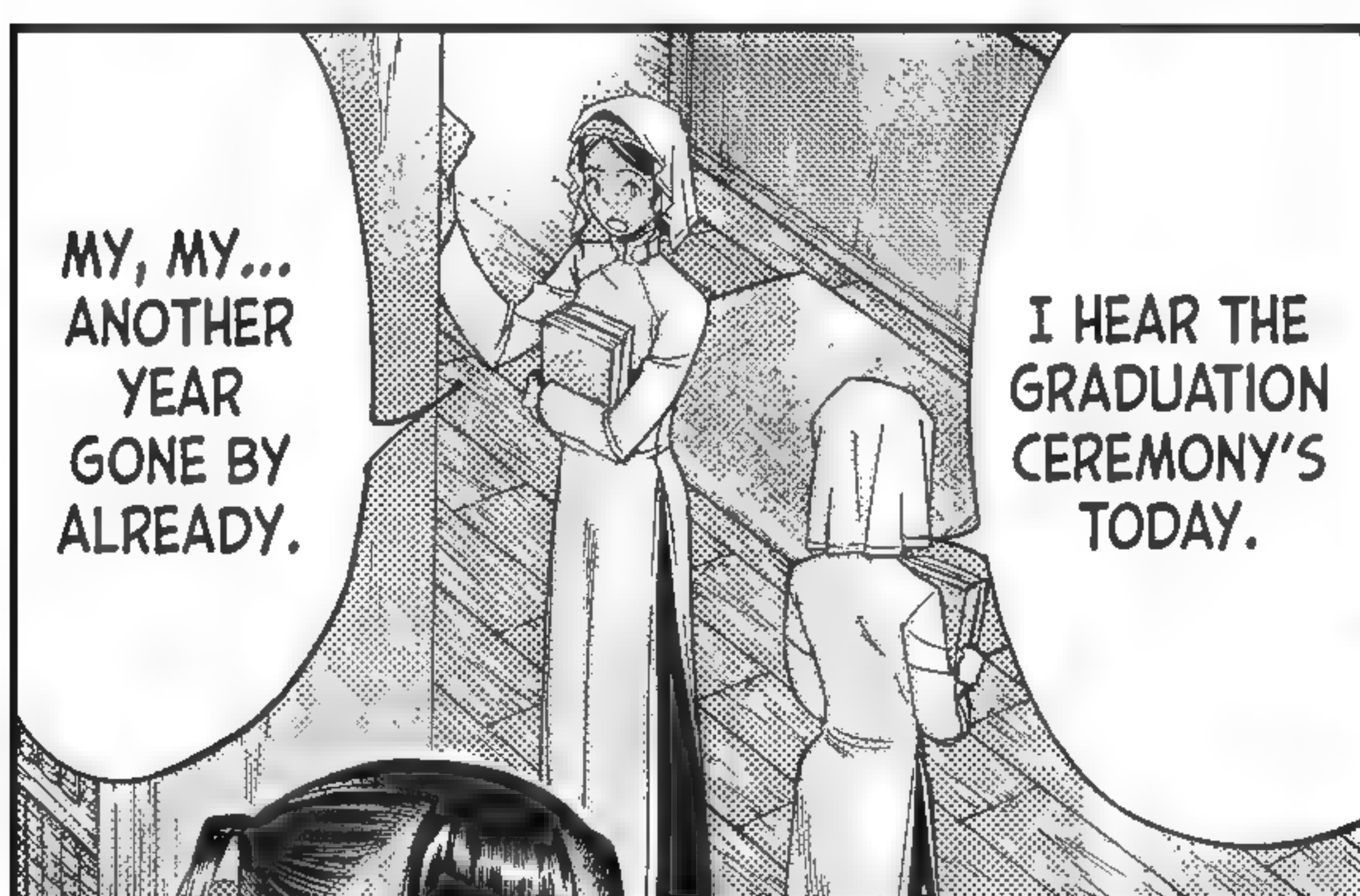
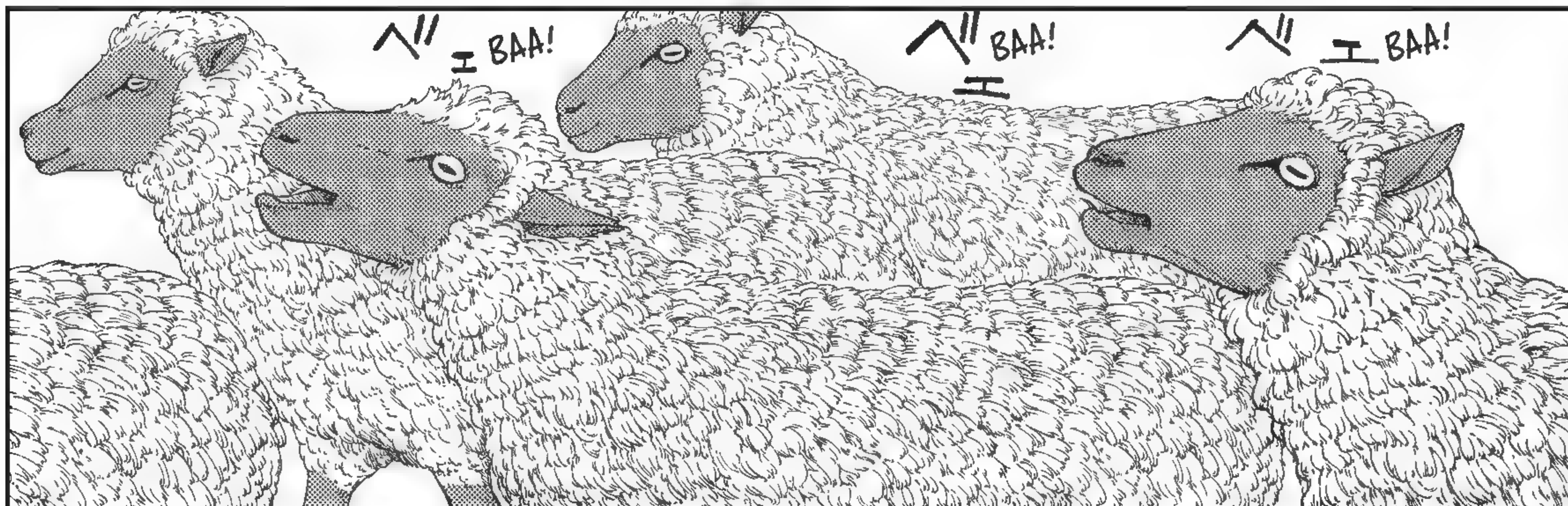
A single-page leaflet that catalyzed an end to slavery on the continent. Its proper title is "A Declaration of Freedom by and for the Creyak People." In a former time, the Creyak were kept by the Rakta as slaves. This single sheet, printed in mass quantities and distributed on a city street, inspired the Creyak to rise up, inciting the War on Land and Sea and ultimately securing Creyak right to freedom. The document is affectionately referred to as "Roar for the Morrow!"—a line from d'Verbois' public declaration that stuck in the hearts and minds of many who listened.



14 *The Boy I Raised*











ALLOW ME TO  
CONGRATULATE  
YOU ALL.



...AND THE  
BEGINNING  
OF A NEW  
CHAPTER  
OF LIFE.



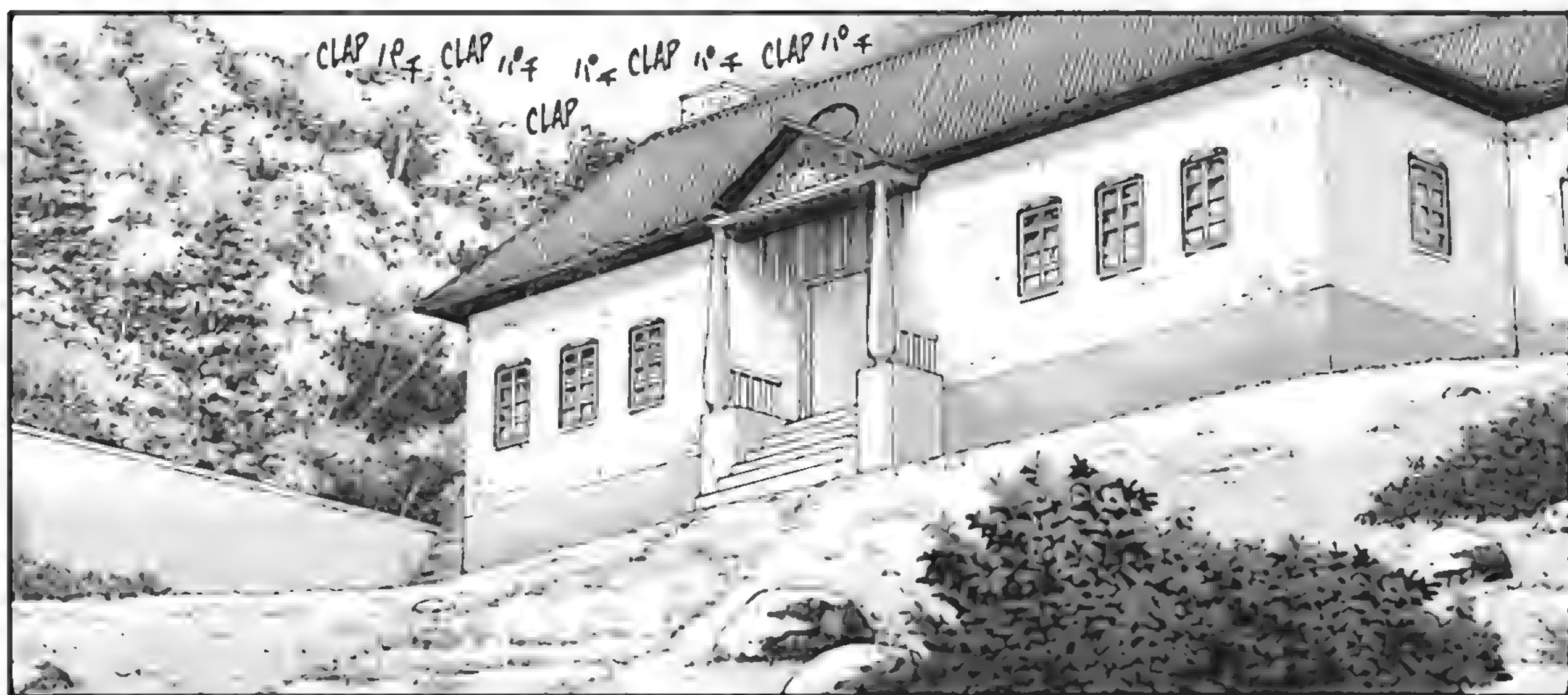
THIS DAY  
MARKS  
THE END  
FOR YOUR  
STUDIES...



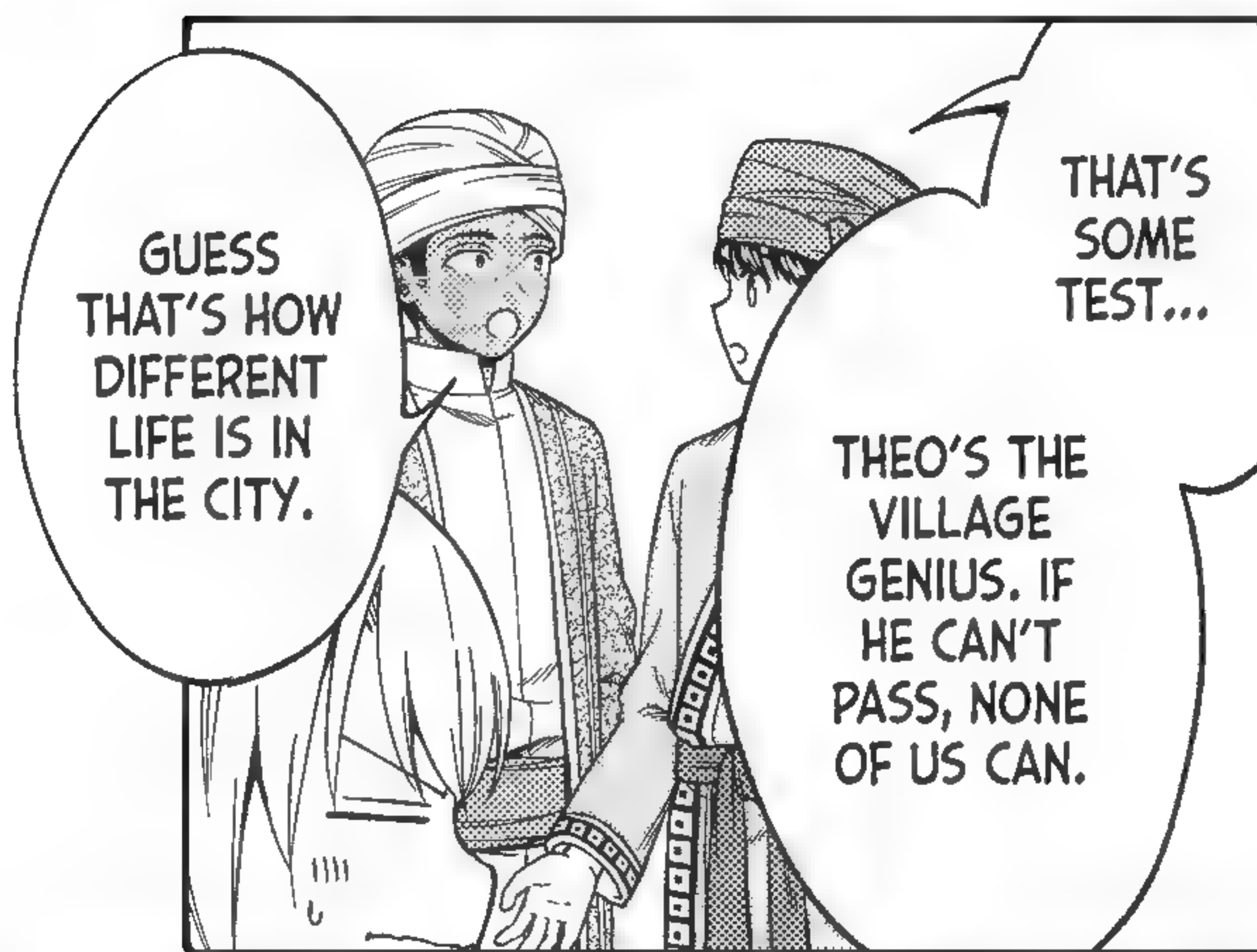
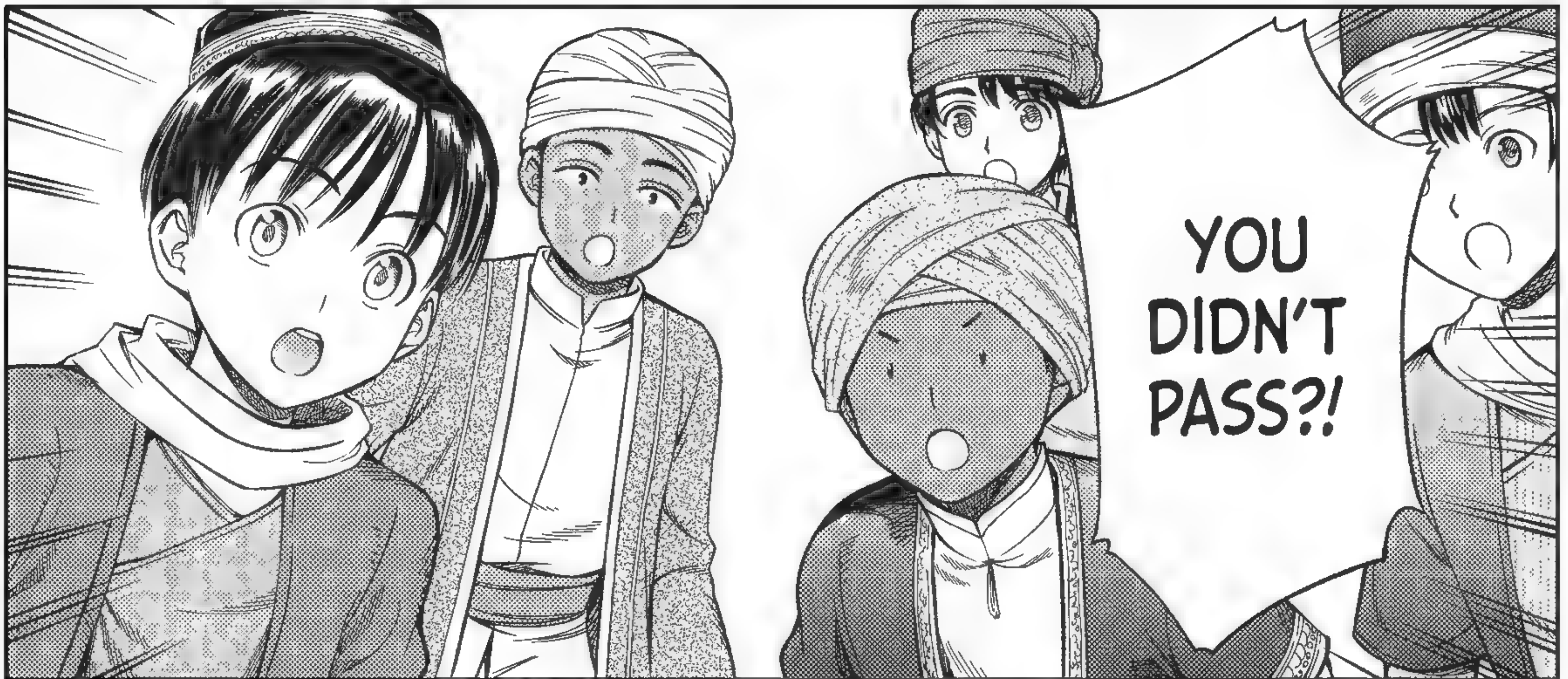
...A STUDENT  
OF EXTRAORDI-  
NARY ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE,  
EVER SINCE THE  
MOMENT HE  
FIRST STEPPED  
THROUGH  
THESE  
DOORS...

THIS  
YEAR'S  
SPEECH  
WILL BE  
OFFERED  
BY...











...DON'T  
WANNA.

PROBABLY STILL  
SORE THAT HE  
GOT ALL THE WAY  
TO GRADUATION  
WITHOUT ONCE  
SCORING ABOVE  
THEO ON A  
TEST.

WHAT'S  
HIS  
DEAL?

THAT'S  
NOT  
WHAT  
THIS  
IS!

AHAHA.  
LOOKS  
LIKE YOU  
GOT IT.

CHEER  
UP, ACAT!  
SCHOLARS  
START AS APPREN-  
TICES. NO  
TEST!

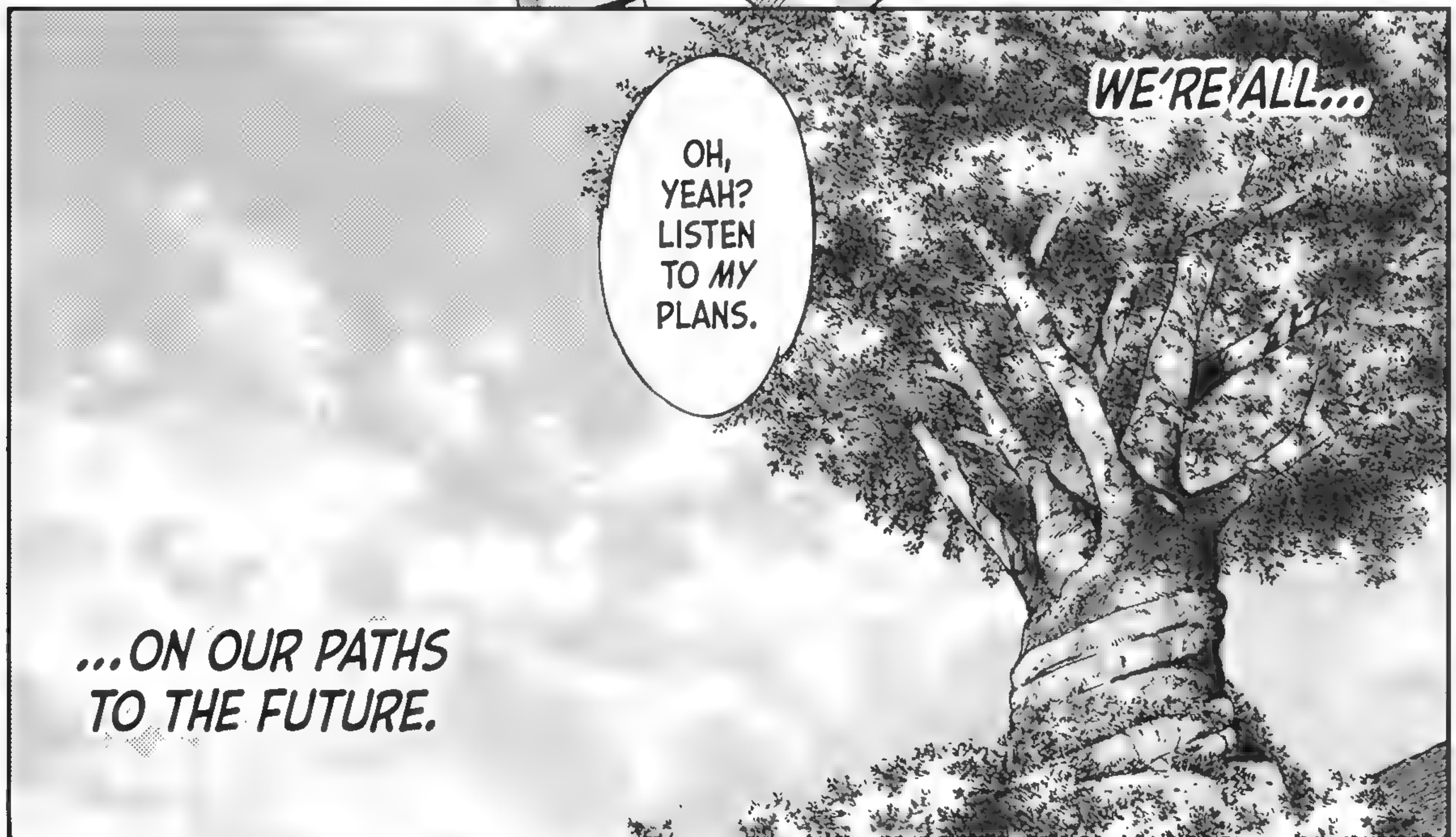
NO, YOU  
MORON!

JEALOUS  
THAT THEO  
BEAT YOU TO  
AFTZAAK?

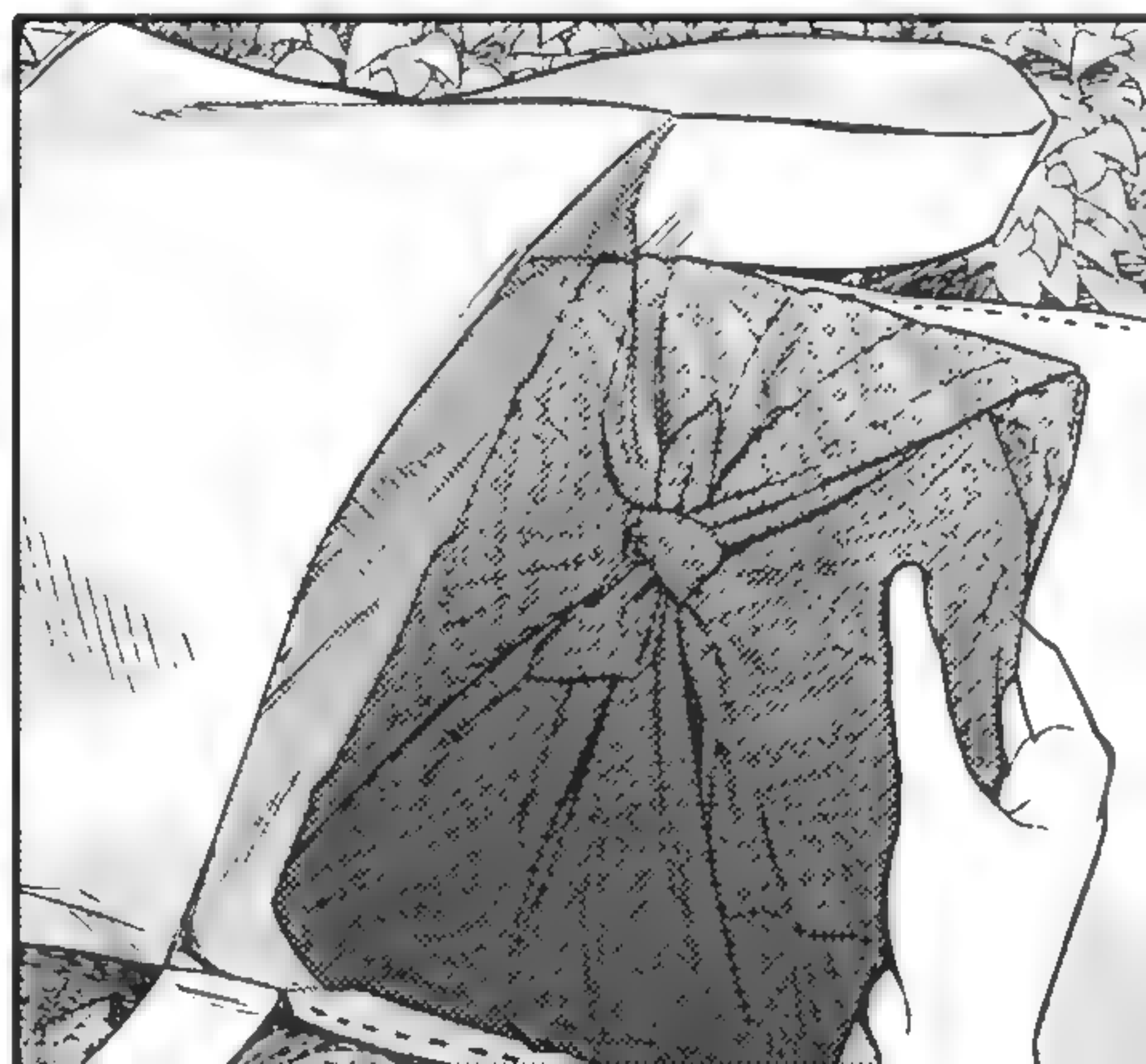
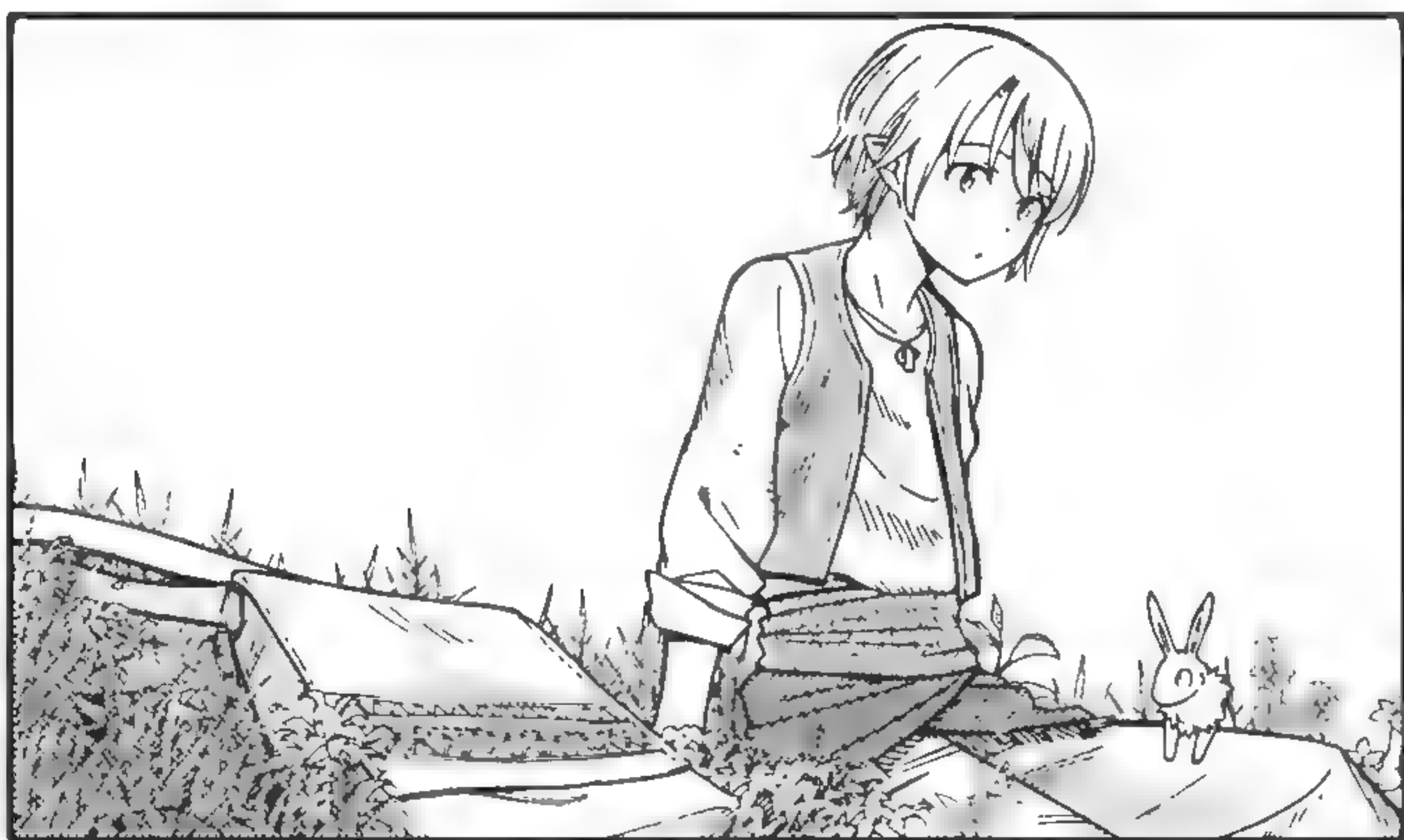
HE'S DEPRESSED.  
HE KNOWS IF  
THEO COULDN'T  
MAKE IT IN THE  
CITY, HE DOESN'T  
EVEN HAVE A  
SHOT.

NAH.  
ACAT'S  
OUT TO  
BECOME A  
HAMNA.





















KUKUO!  
YOU'RE  
HERE!

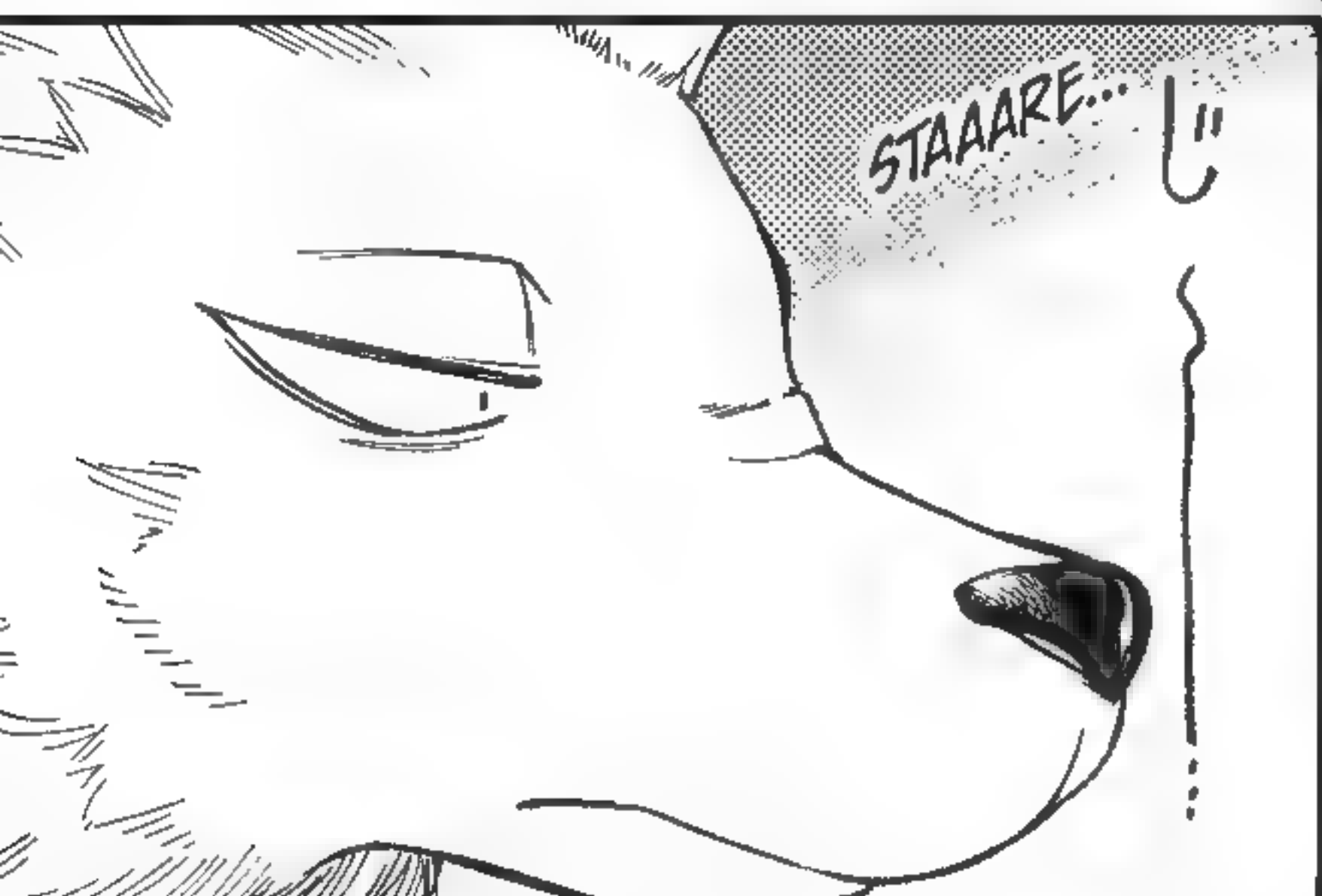


WRUFF!

IT'S SO  
GOOD TO  
SEE YOU!

HM?  
THIS  
LITTLE  
ONE?

I MISSED  
YOU SO  
MUCH!



STAAARE...



SKEEE...

SKEE...

CAN HE SENSE  
WHAT I AM?!



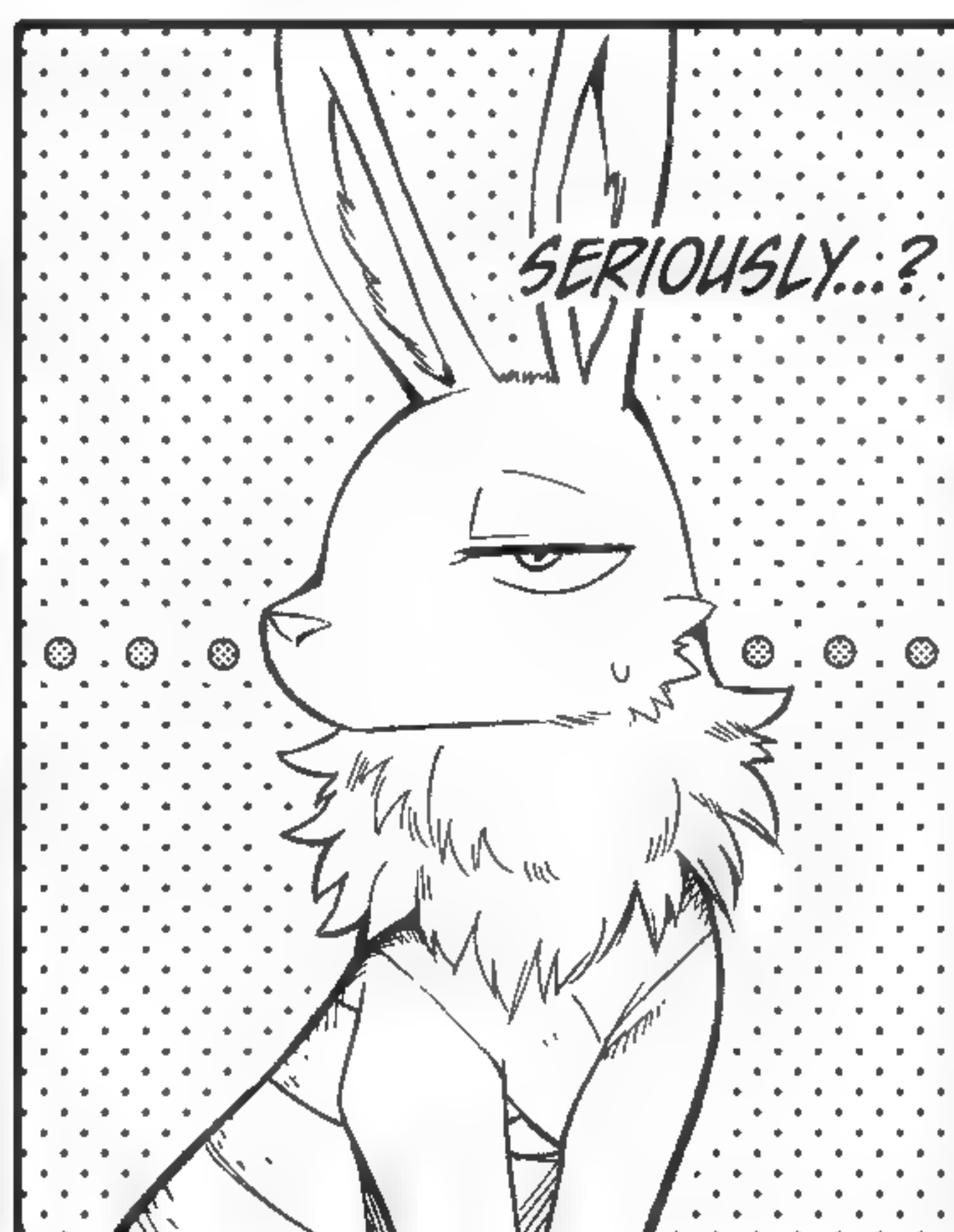
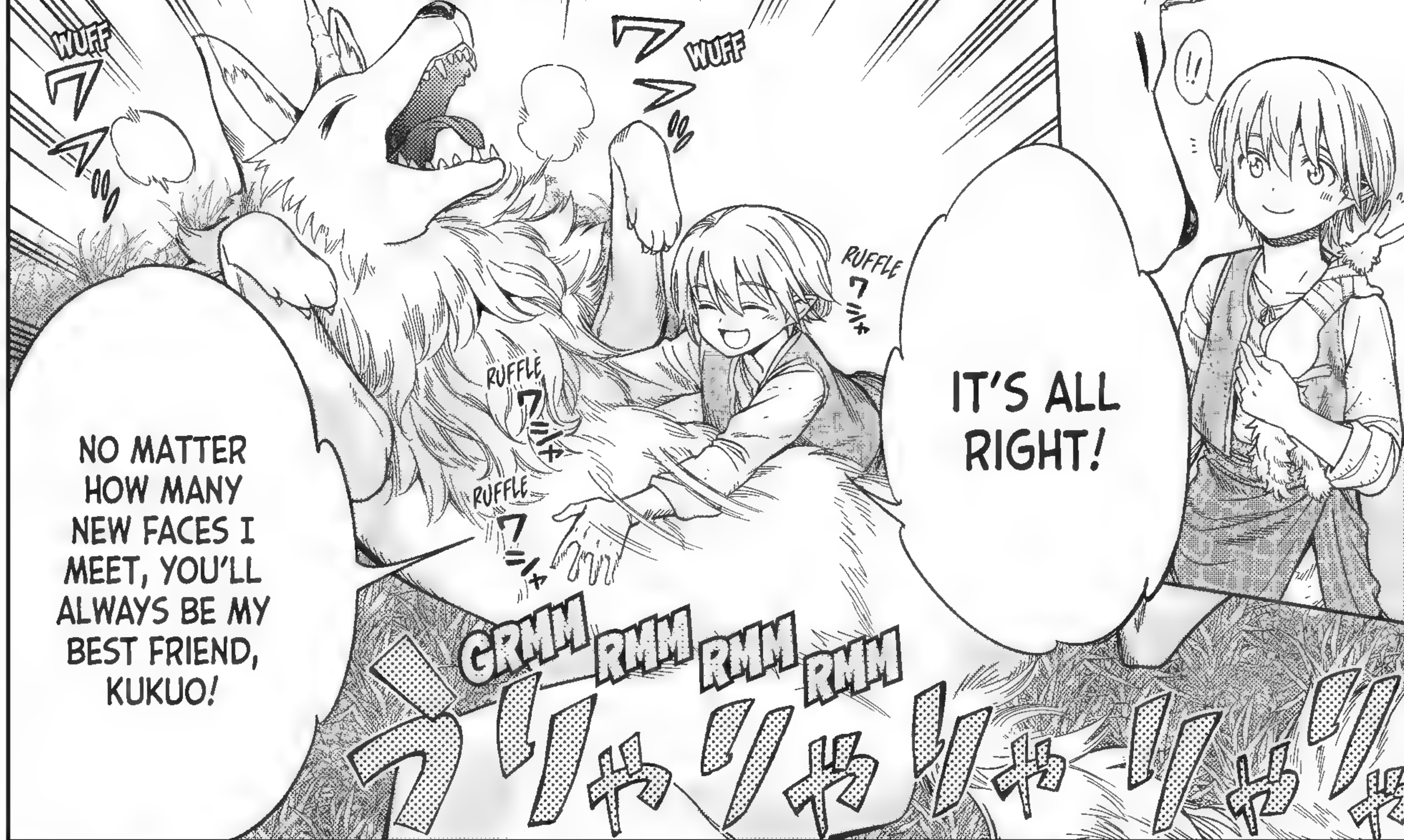
HEY  
THERE!



SHE'S  
A NEW  
FRIEND.  
WE MET  
ON MY  
WAY TO  
AFT-  
ZAAK!

HER  
NAME'S  
UIRA!

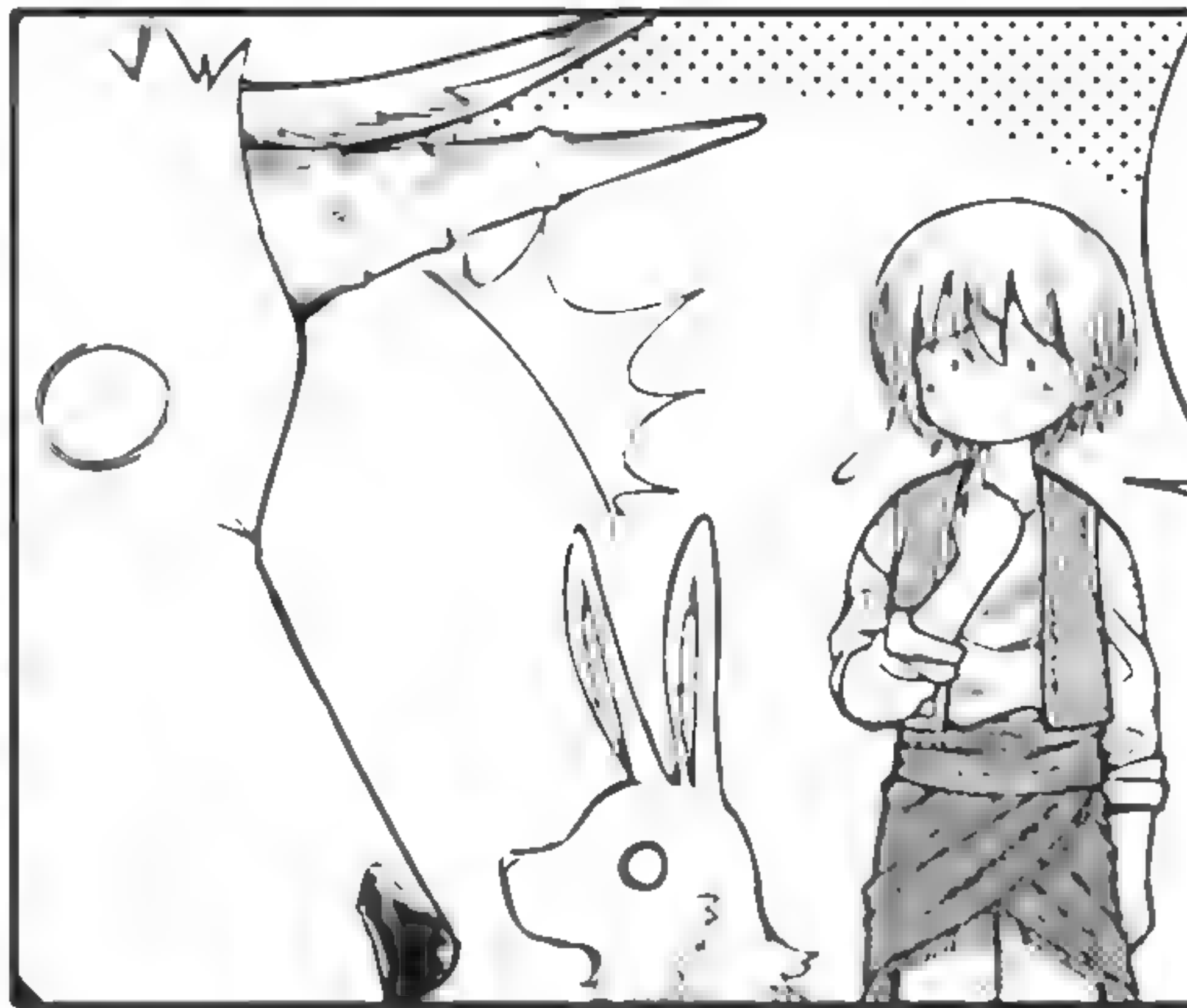




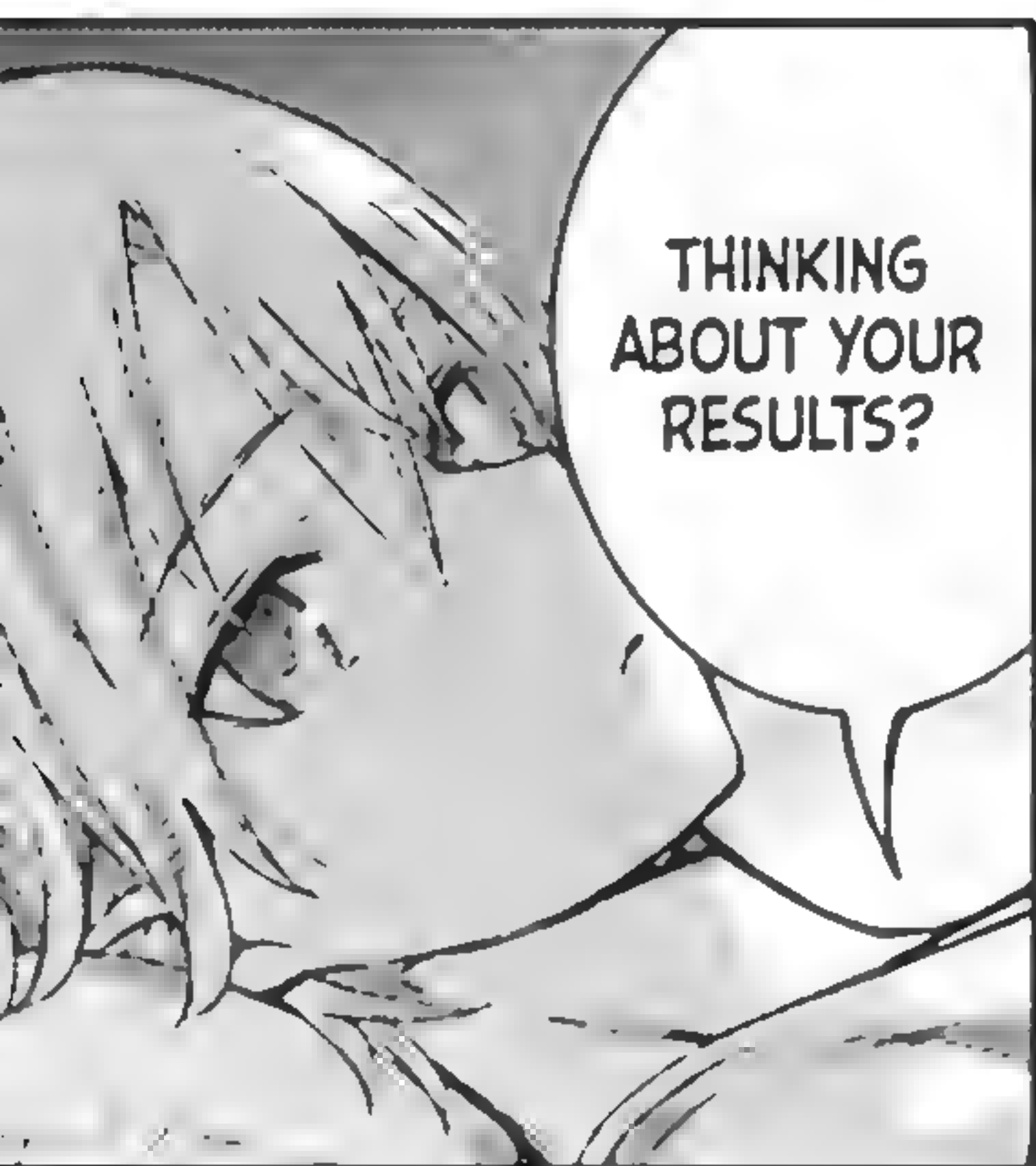
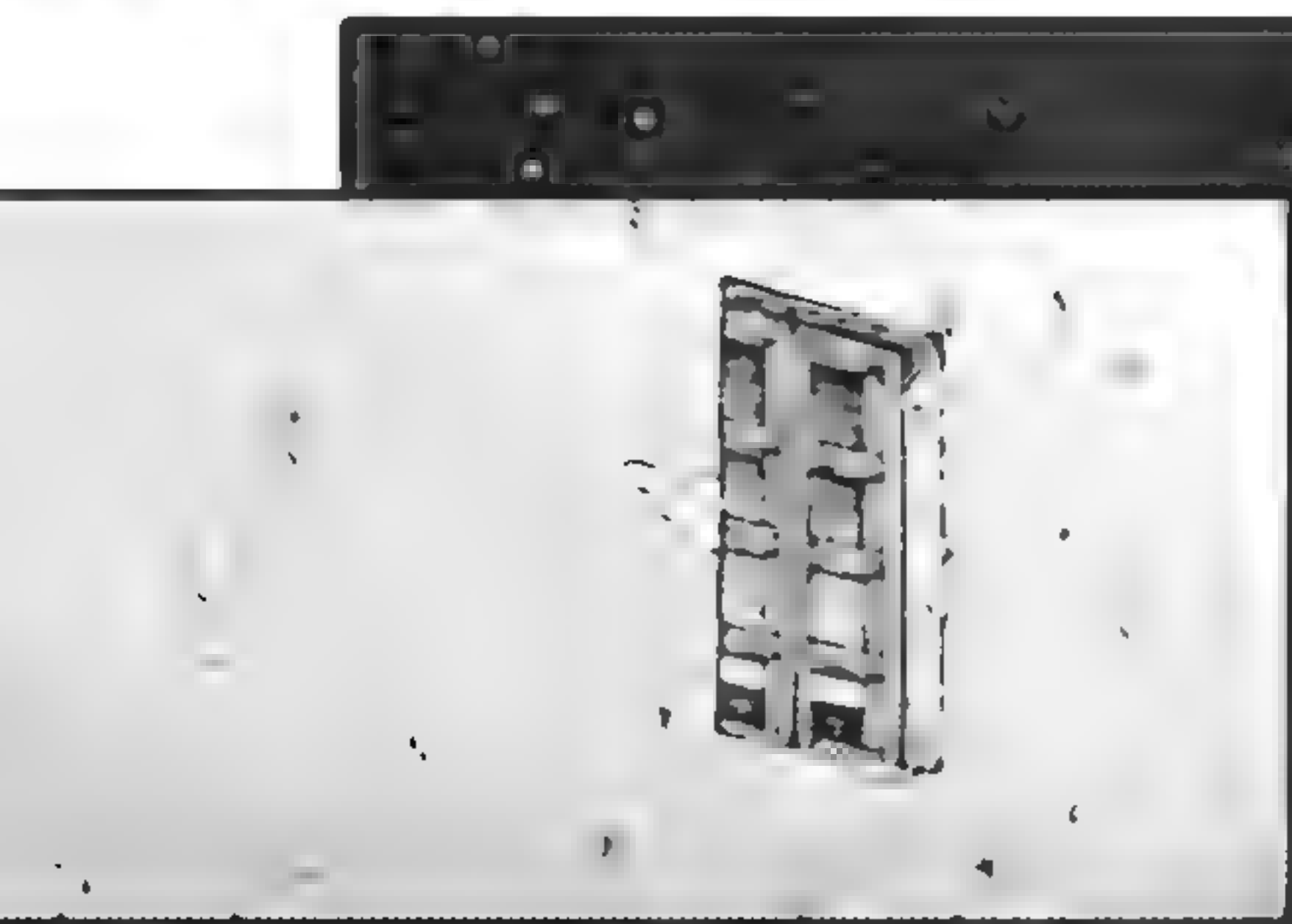




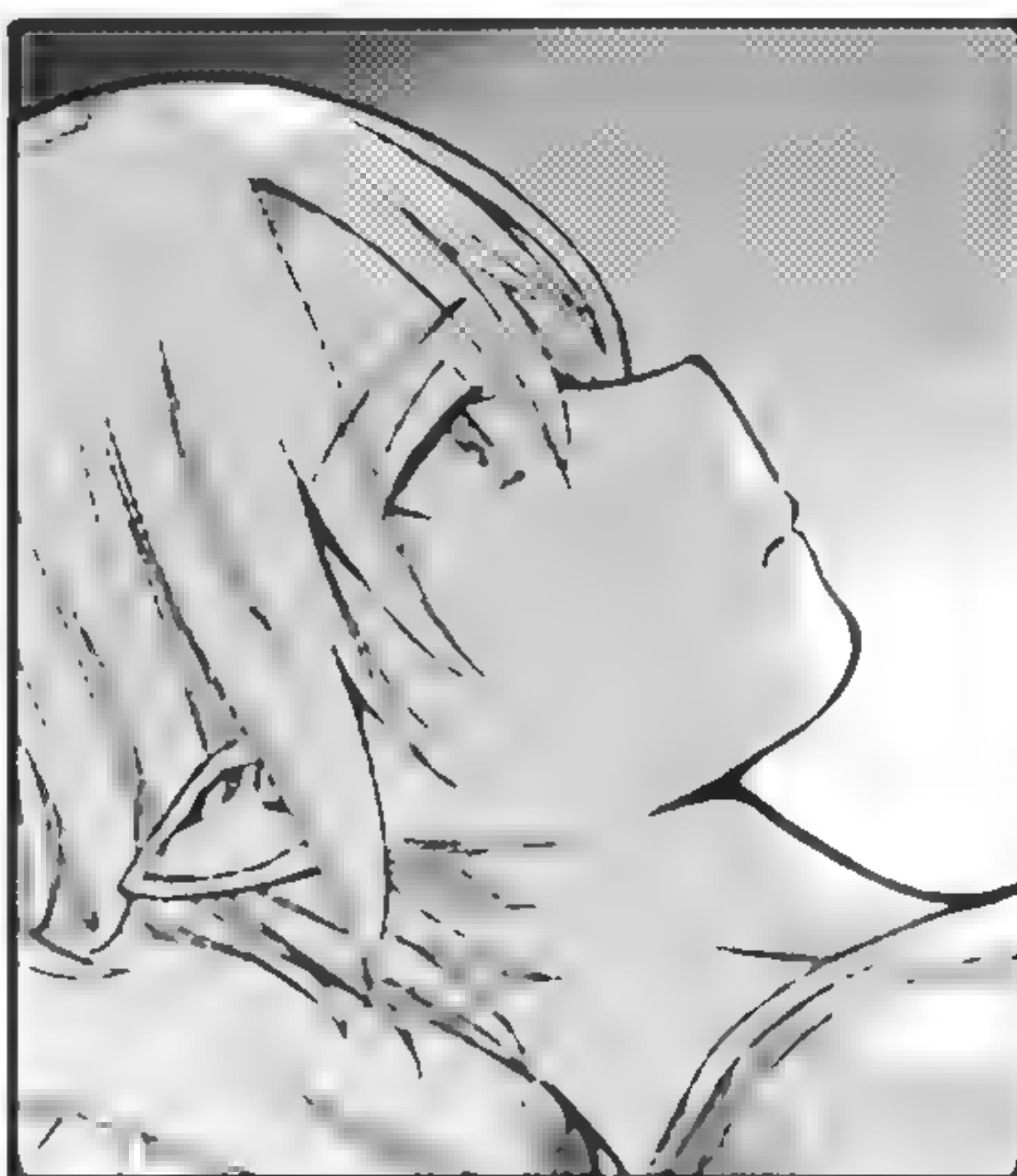
WE'RE  
ALL GOOD  
PALS!!



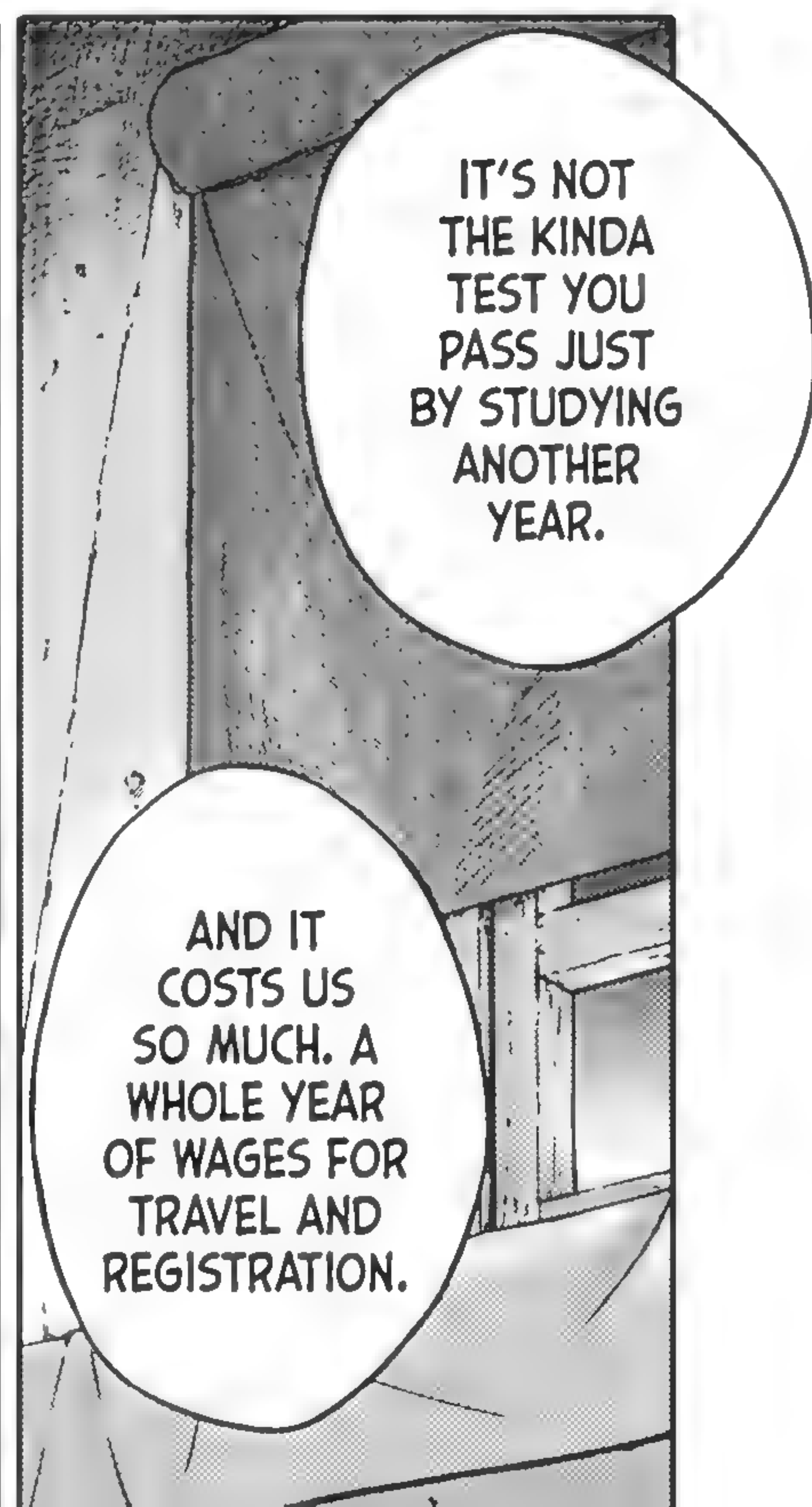
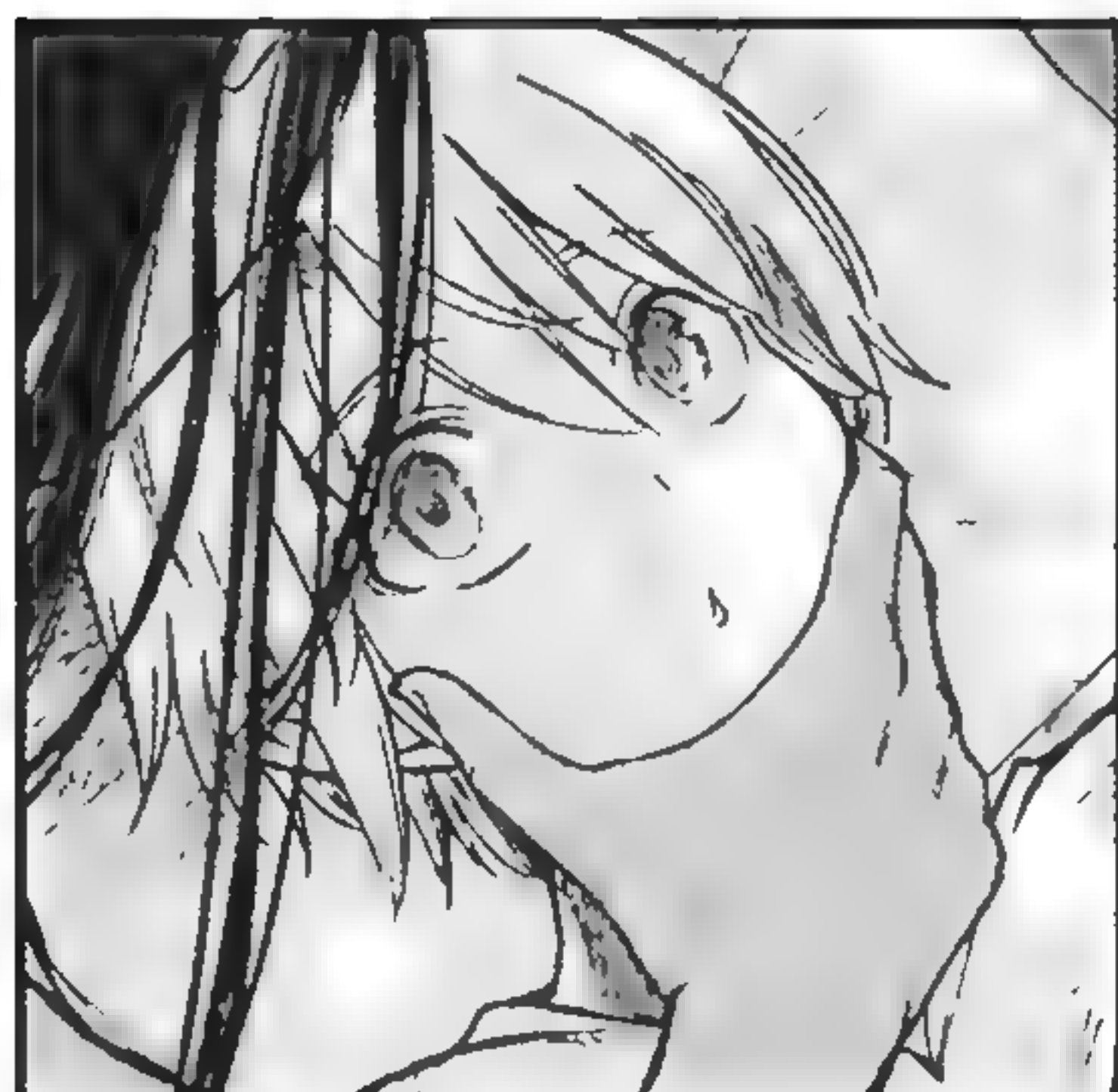
I'D HOPED  
YOU MIGHT BE  
FRIENDS...



THINKING  
ABOUT YOUR  
RESULTS?











AS LONG  
AS I KNOW  
YOU'RE SMILING  
WHEREVER YOU  
ARE, THAT'S  
ENOUGH  
FOR ME.

YOU TAKE  
WHATEVER  
PATH YOU  
WANT TO  
TAKE.



It's all  
right  
now.

Thereere,  
cheere.



There,  
there...

BUT! JUST  
TAKING THAT  
TEST WAS A  
BIG DEAL.



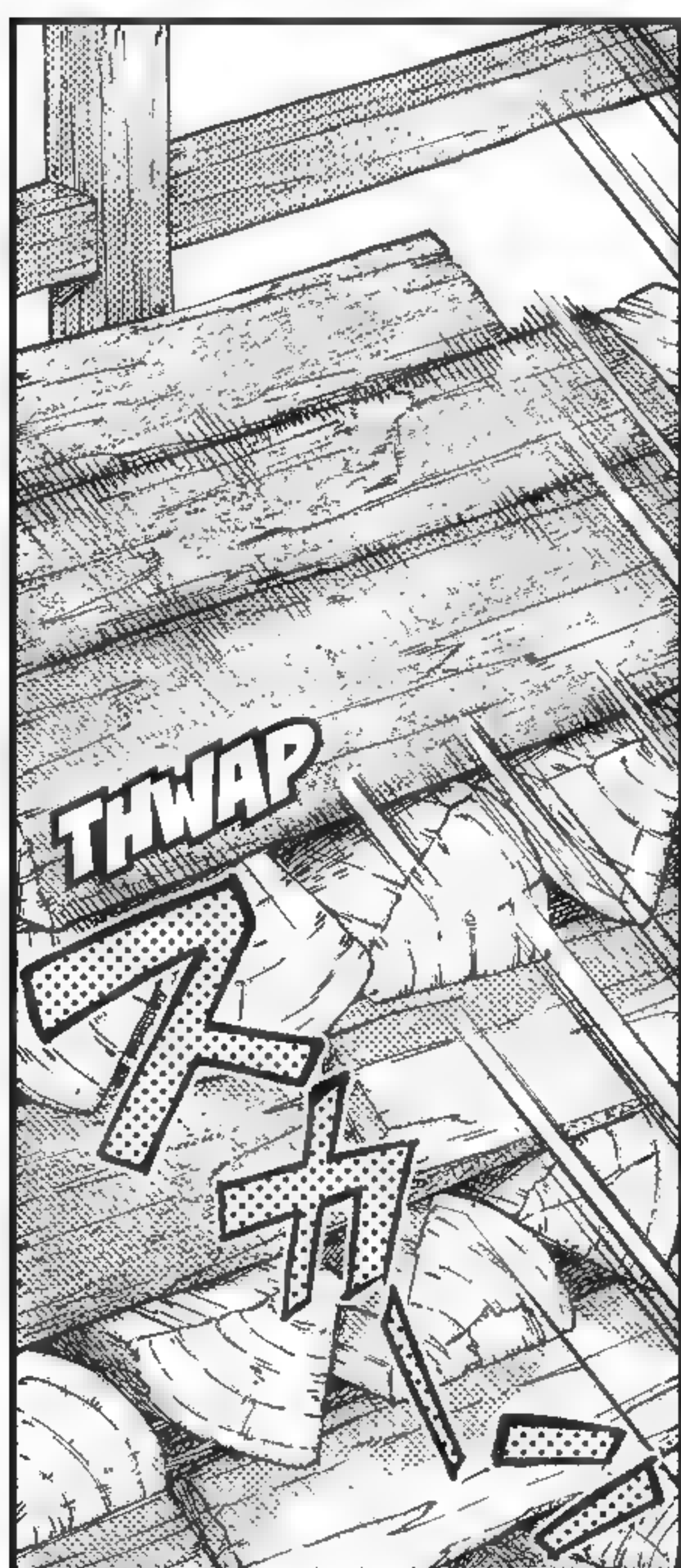
THAT'S TRUE.  
WITH THE BED  
THIS CRAMPED,  
I WAS KINDA  
HOPING YOU'D  
PASS.

HEY! I'M  
NOT A  
LITTLE BOY  
ANYMORE!



...THANKS,  
TIFA.









GONNA GET  
AN ARTICLE  
PUBLISHED  
IN THE  
COMPEN-  
DIA...

...AND  
HAVE ME  
A WHOLE  
BUNCH  
PRETTY  
WIVES!



WELL, I'M  
GONNA  
BECOME  
A HAMNA.



THE ONLY  
REASON  
I MADE  
IT THIS  
FAR...

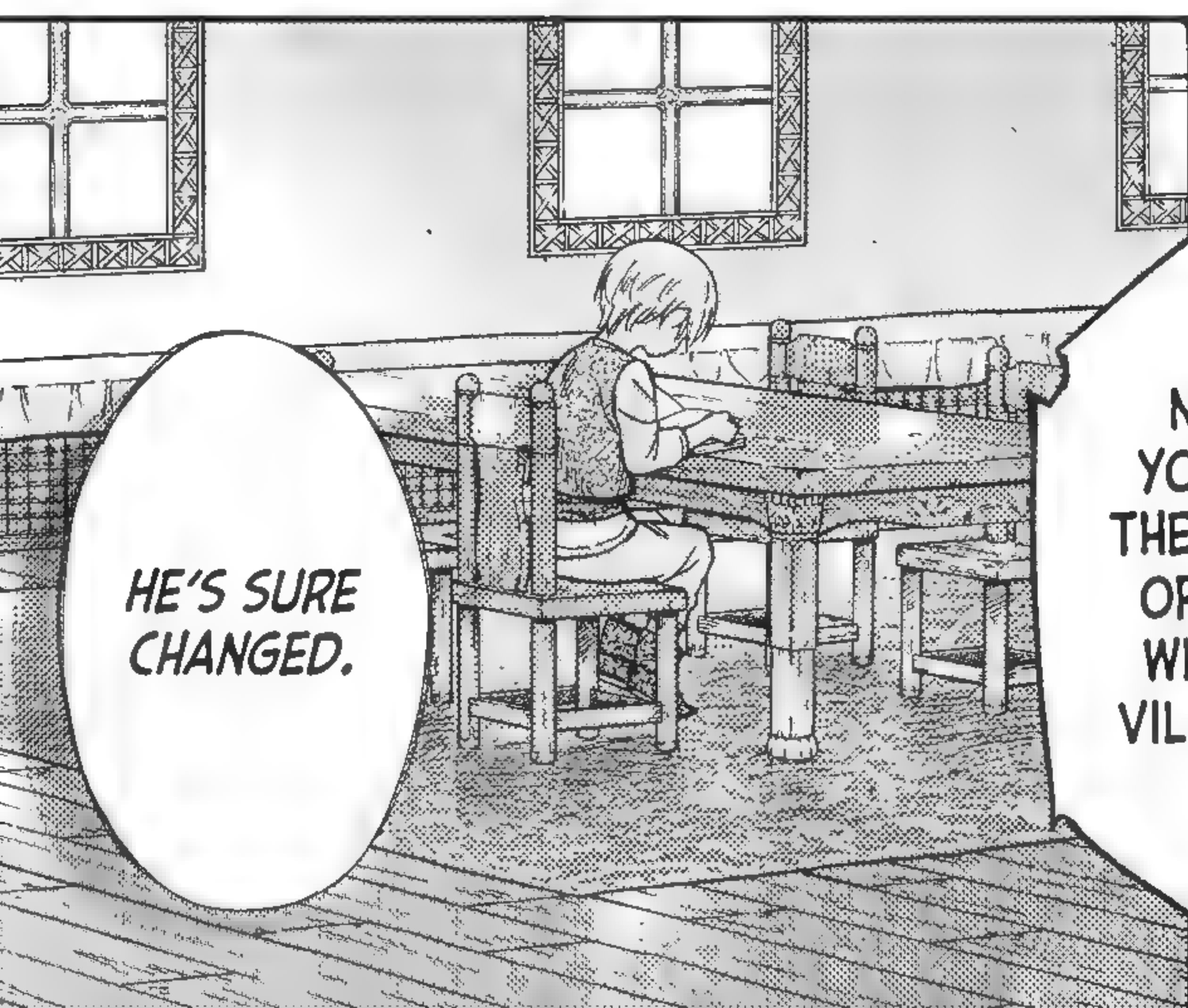
...IS  
BECAUSE  
I WAS SO  
DETERMINED  
TO KEEP UP  
WITH YOU,  
Y'KNOW?

...



NOT WHAT  
I WANNA  
HEAR FROM  
THE KID  
I NEVER  
MANAGED  
TO BEAT!

AND YOU  
WILL! I  
KNOW YOU  
WILL!



HE'S SURE  
CHANGED.

NOW  
YOU'RE  
THE HOPE  
OF THE  
WHOLE  
VILLAGE.



YOU USED  
TO BE  
THE DUMB  
LONG-EARS  
FROM THE  
SLUMS.





HE AN' HIS FRIENDS ALL APOLOGIZED.

NO WAY! USUF USED TO BULLY HIM AS MUCH AS WE DID!

SAW HIM WALKIN' HOME WITH USUF YESTERDAY.

FOR REAL?!



WHAT?!

THINKIN' MAYBE I SHOULD APOLOGIZE, TOO.



PSHHH. YOU COULDN'T TAKE HIM IF YOU TRIED.

EVER SINCE HE STARTED WORKIN' FOR MISTER GANAN, HE'S ALL PROTECTED OR WHATEVER.

*Those guys all look out for each other...*

HE'S WAY STRONGER THAN HE USED TO BE.

...



I-I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY FRIENDS!

GRK!



W-WELL, I'M NOT SAYING SORRY.

LET'S GO TRY!

I DUNNO. I JUST GET THE FEELING HE'D FORGIVE ME. MAYBE WE COULD BE FRIENDS.



ALL 'CAUSE OF YOU.

THE WHOLE VILLAGE.

FEELS LIKE THIS WHOLE PLACE CHANGED ON ACCOUNT OF YOU.

IT'S IMPRESSIVE, IS ALL I'M SAYIN'.





ALL I'M SAYIN' IS ONE ATTEMPT ISN'T ENOUGH TO-

HEY! SHUT IT!

A COMPLIMENT FROM YOU? THAT'S BIG!



GRIN

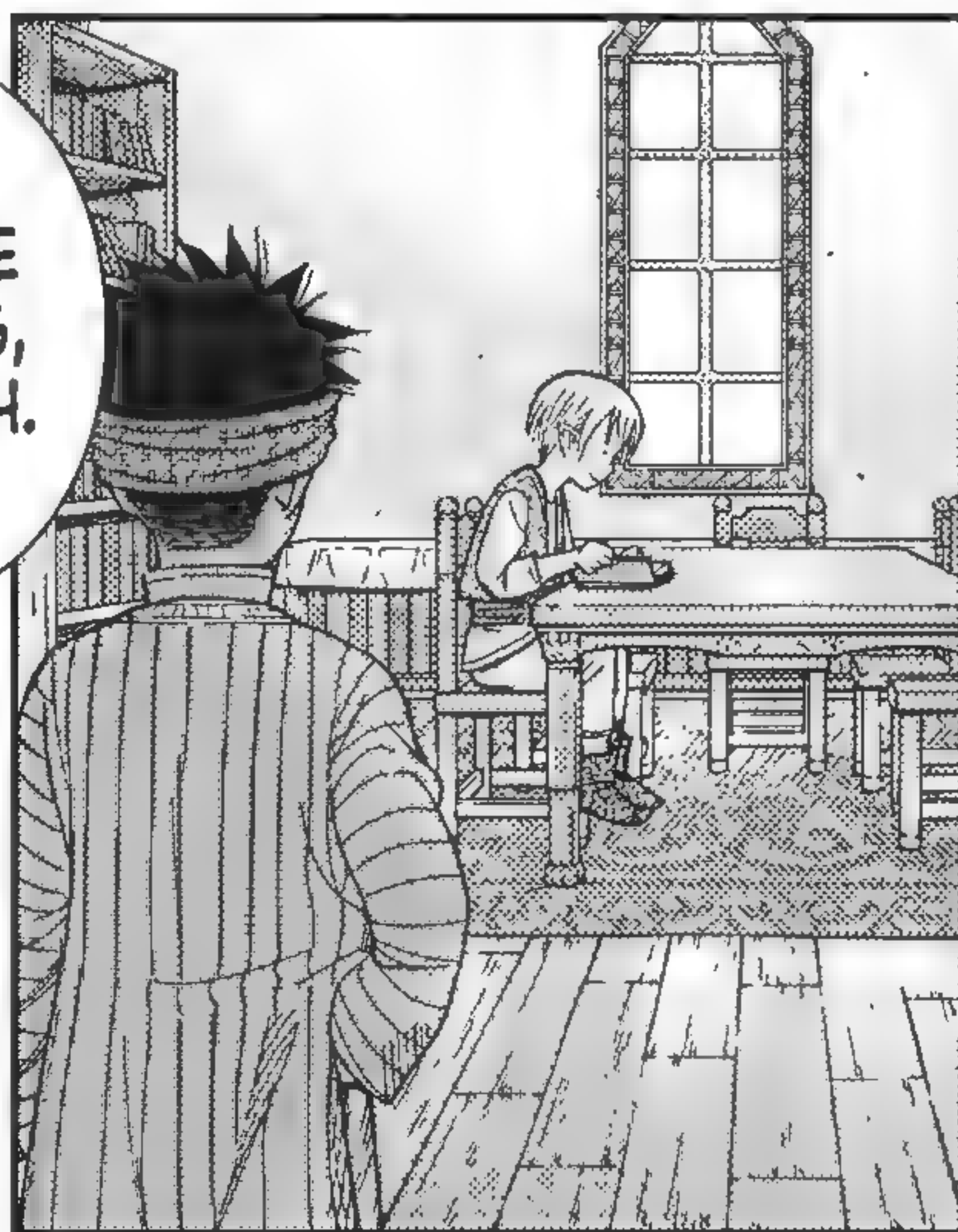
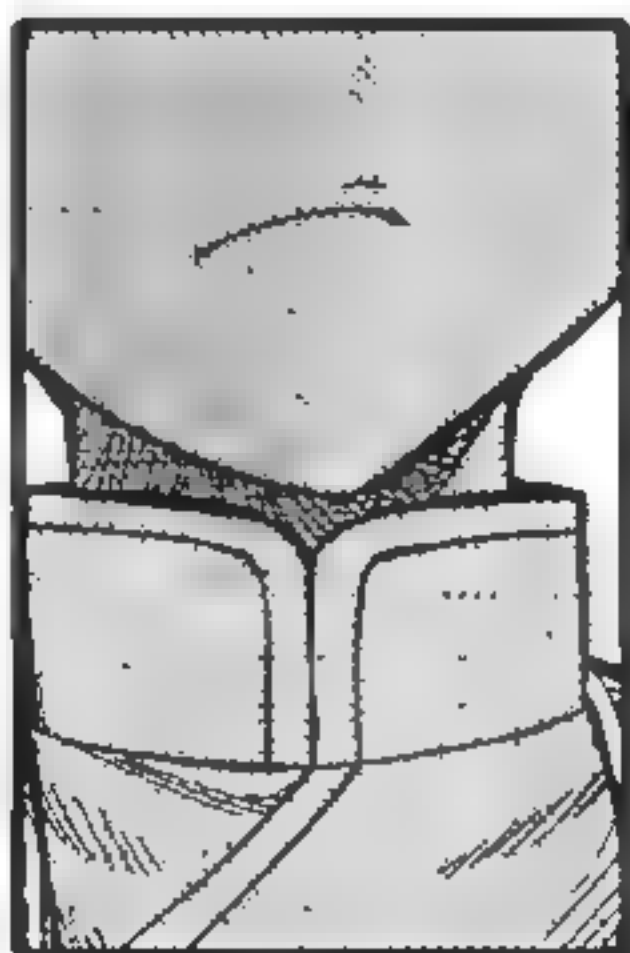


YOU'RE WRONG, THOUGH.

IT WASN'T BECAUSE OF ME.



HEY, UM...

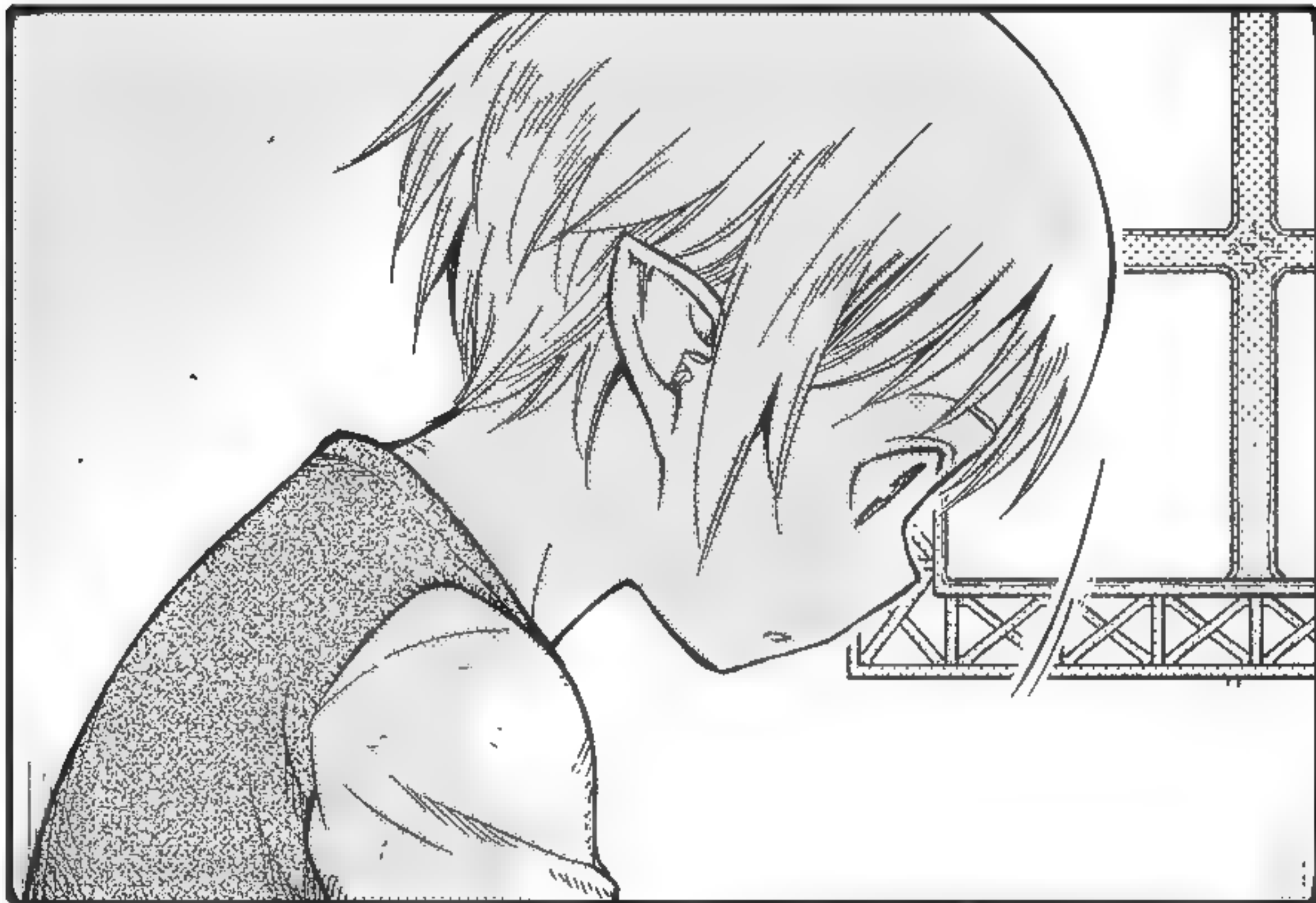
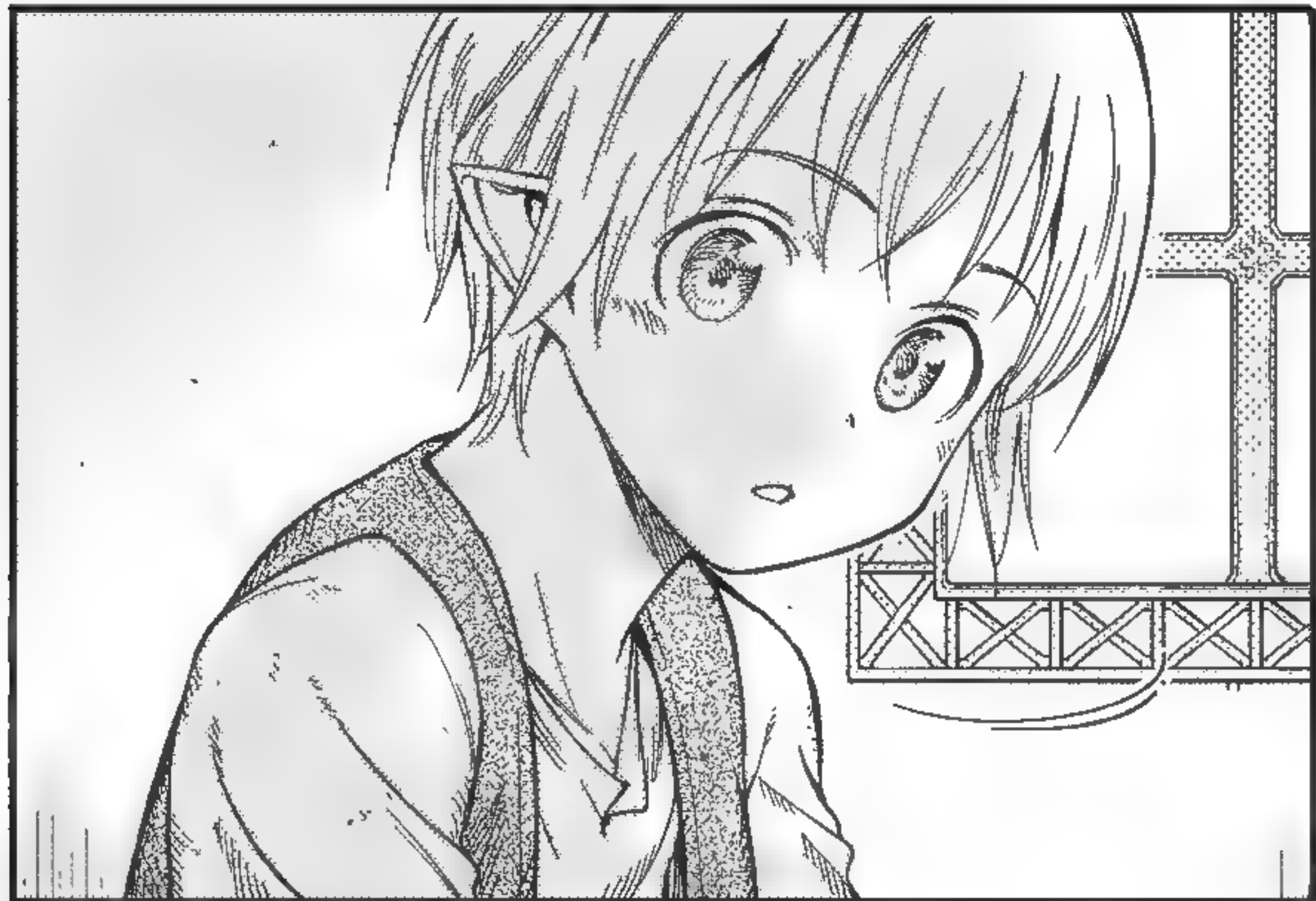


IT ANY GOOD?

... THAT BOOK YOU'RE READ-ING.

...





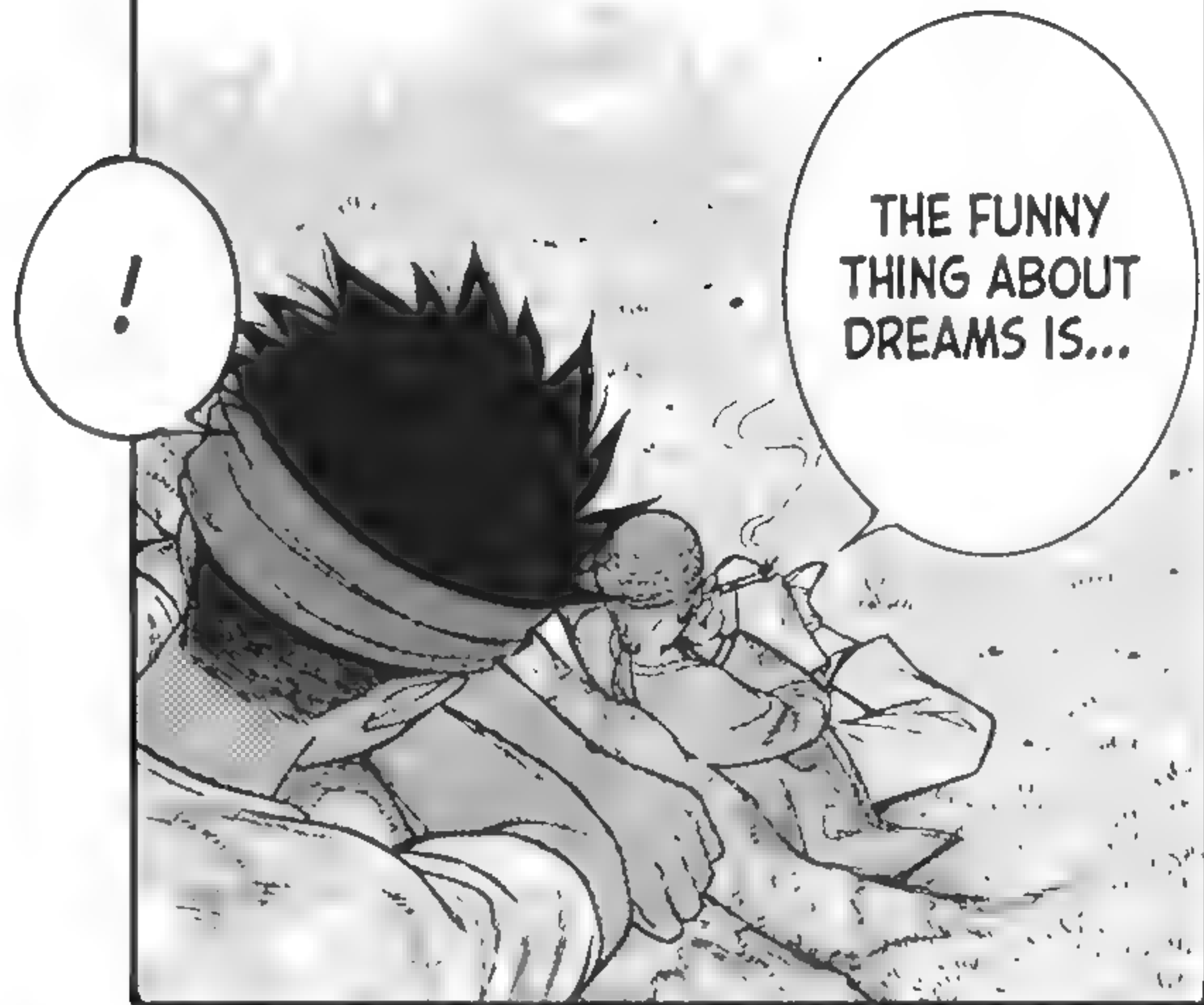
WANNA  
READ IT  
TOGETHER?!

YEAH!  
IT'S  
GREAT!

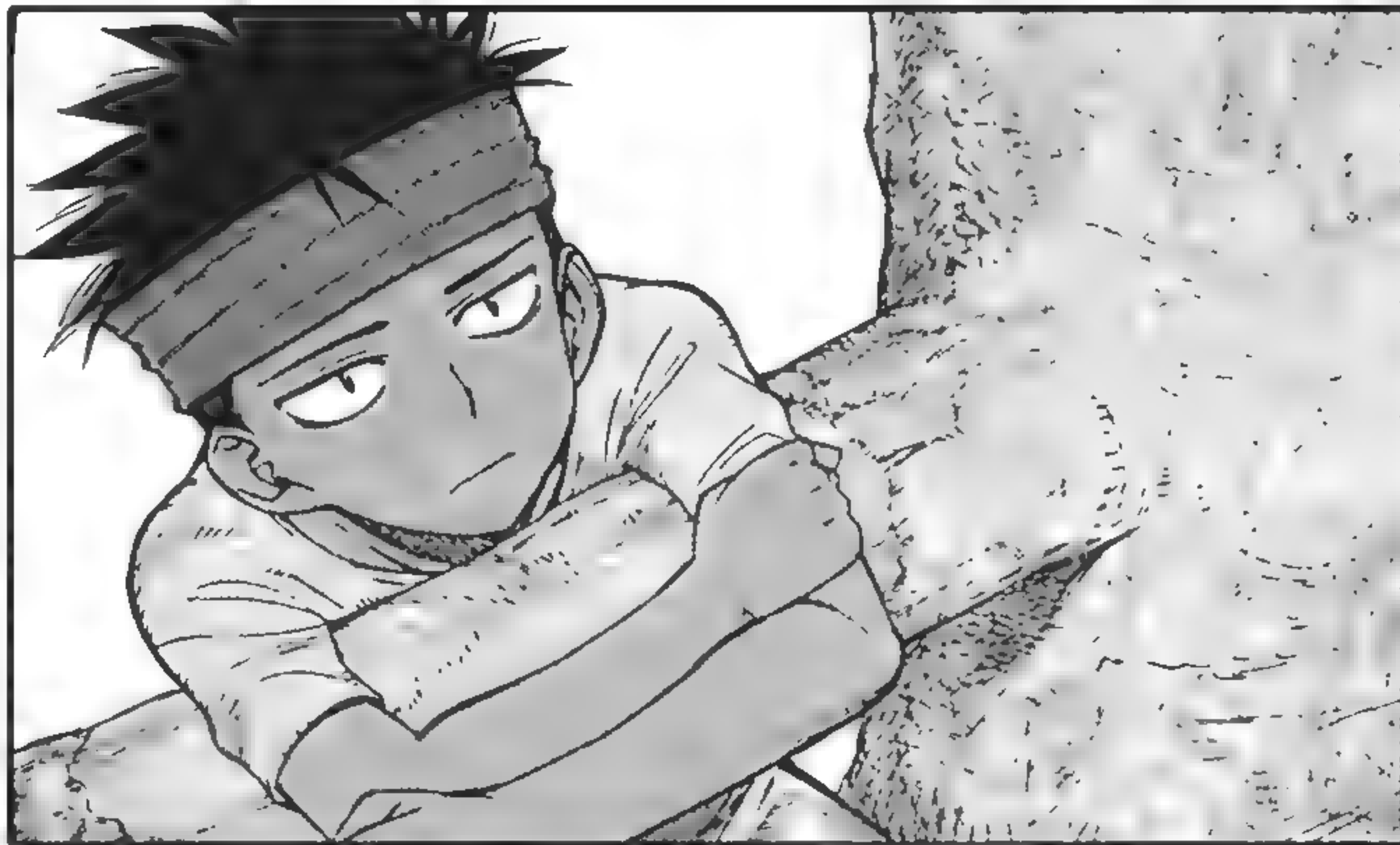
IT WAS  
THE  
BOOKS.

THEY'RE  
THE ONES  
THAT  
OPENED  
THE WAY.





THE FUNNY  
THING ABOUT  
DREAMS IS...







HEY,  
THEO?

GOTTA BE  
QUICK!

ARGH!  
I KNEW  
THAT  
ONE!

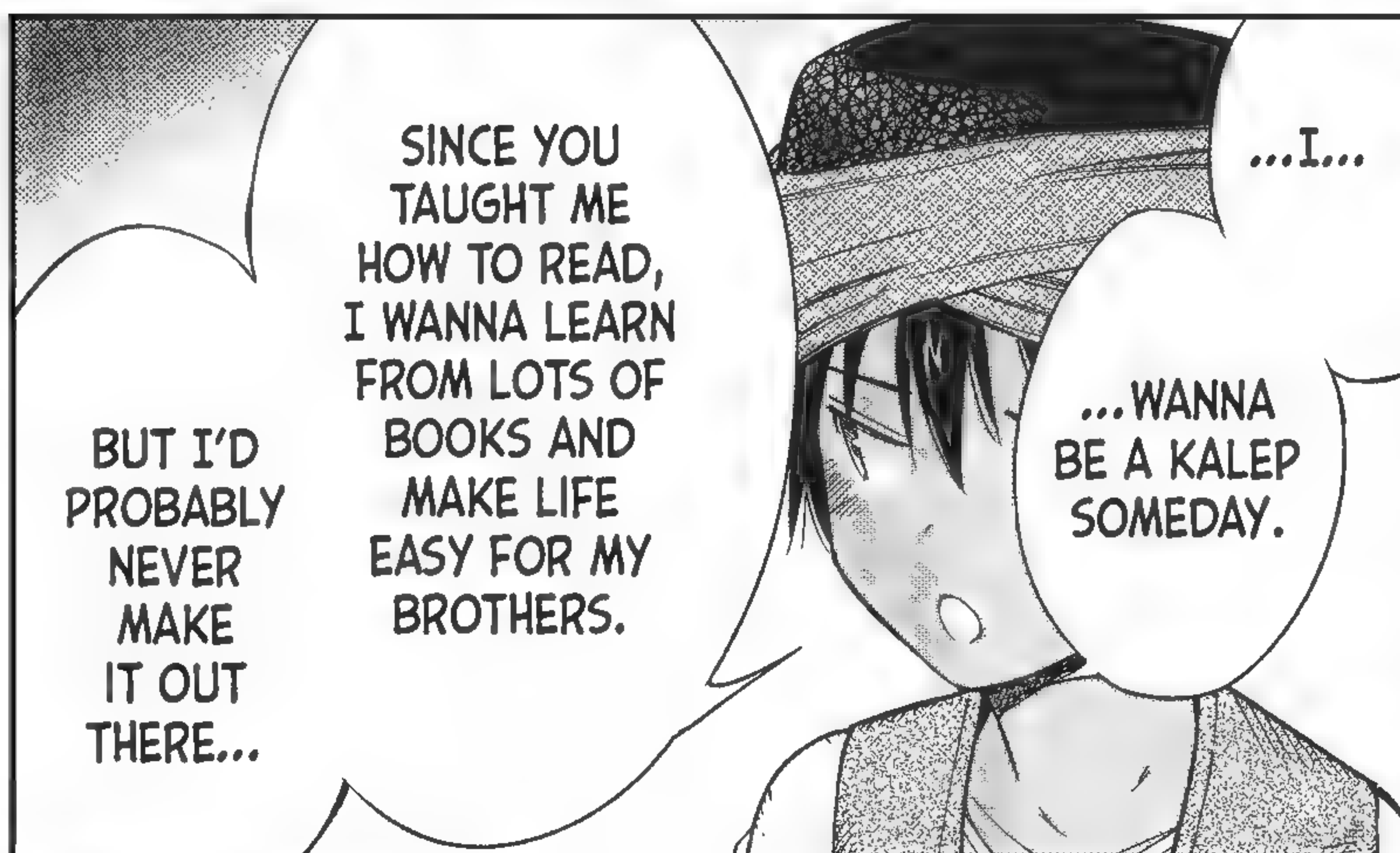
WHAT  
ABOUT THIS  
ONE? ANY  
GUESSES?

WHAT  
IS IT,  
OLLIN?

WHAT'S  
IT LIKE  
OUTSIDE  
THE  
VILLAGE?

THAT'S  
RIGHT!

A/NA!  
"MAP"!



BUT I'D  
PROBABLY  
NEVER  
MAKE  
IT OUT  
THERE...

SINCE YOU  
TAUGHT ME  
HOW TO READ,  
I WANNA LEARN  
FROM LOTS OF  
BOOKS AND  
MAKE LIFE  
EASY FOR MY  
BROTHERS.

...I...

...WANNA  
BE A KALEP  
SOMEDAY.



IT WAS  
AMAZING!  
THE TOWNS  
AND THE  
PEOPLE!

I COULDN'T  
KEEP UP  
WITH ALL  
OF IT.

NOT  
EVEN  
YOU...?

?

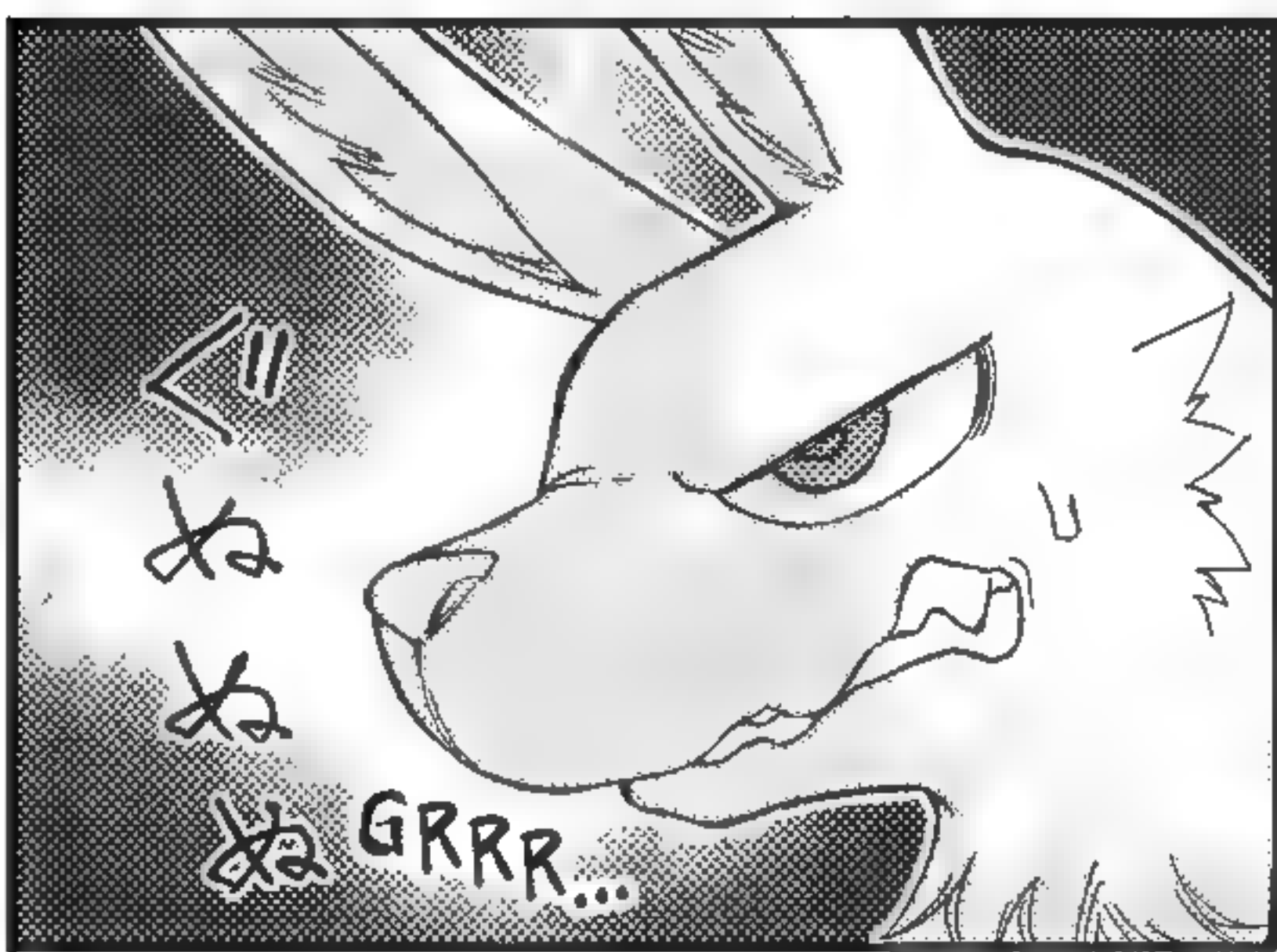
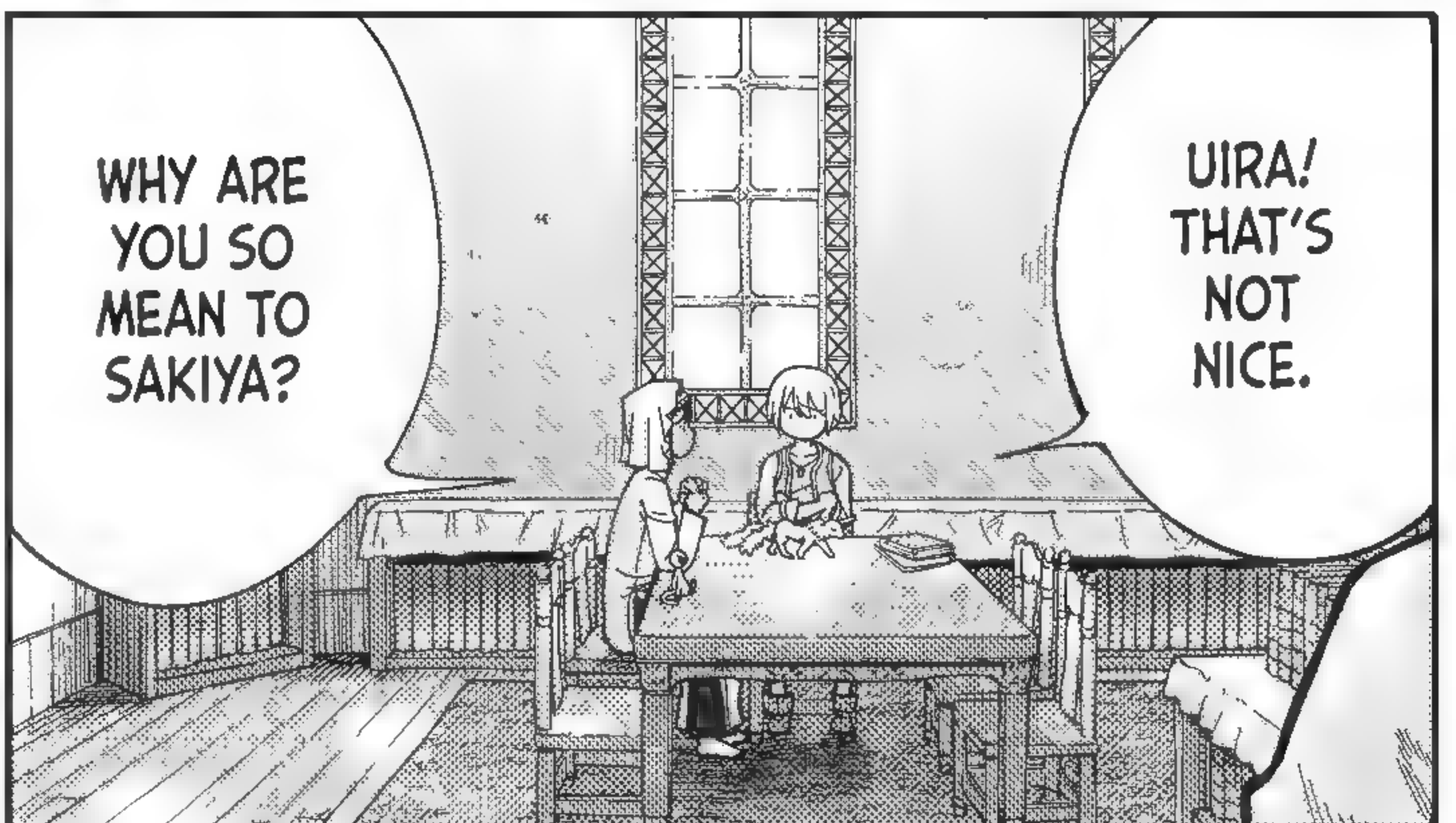
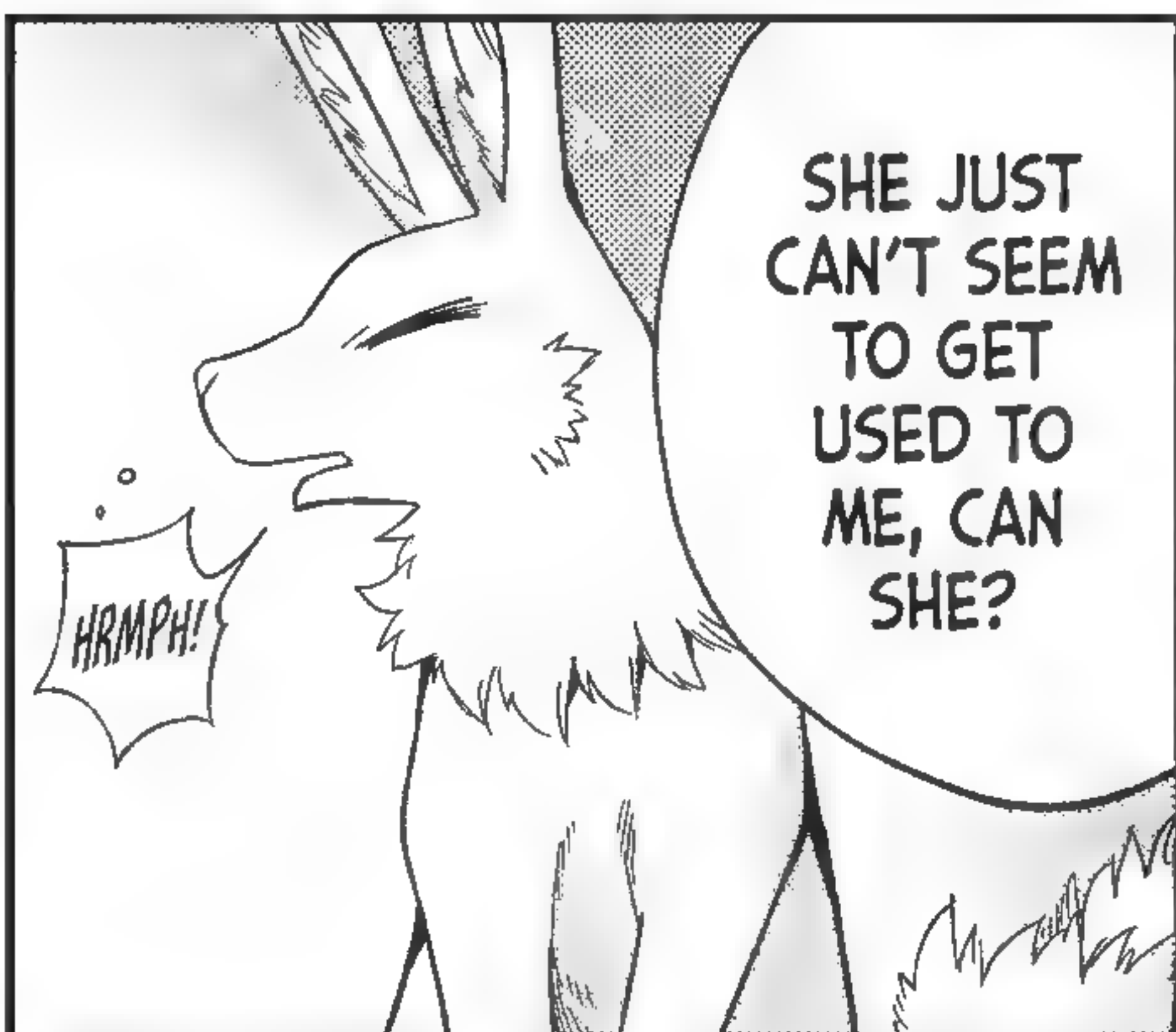
WHAT  
DO YOU  
MEAN?

YOU  
CAN! I  
KNOW  
YOU  
CAN!

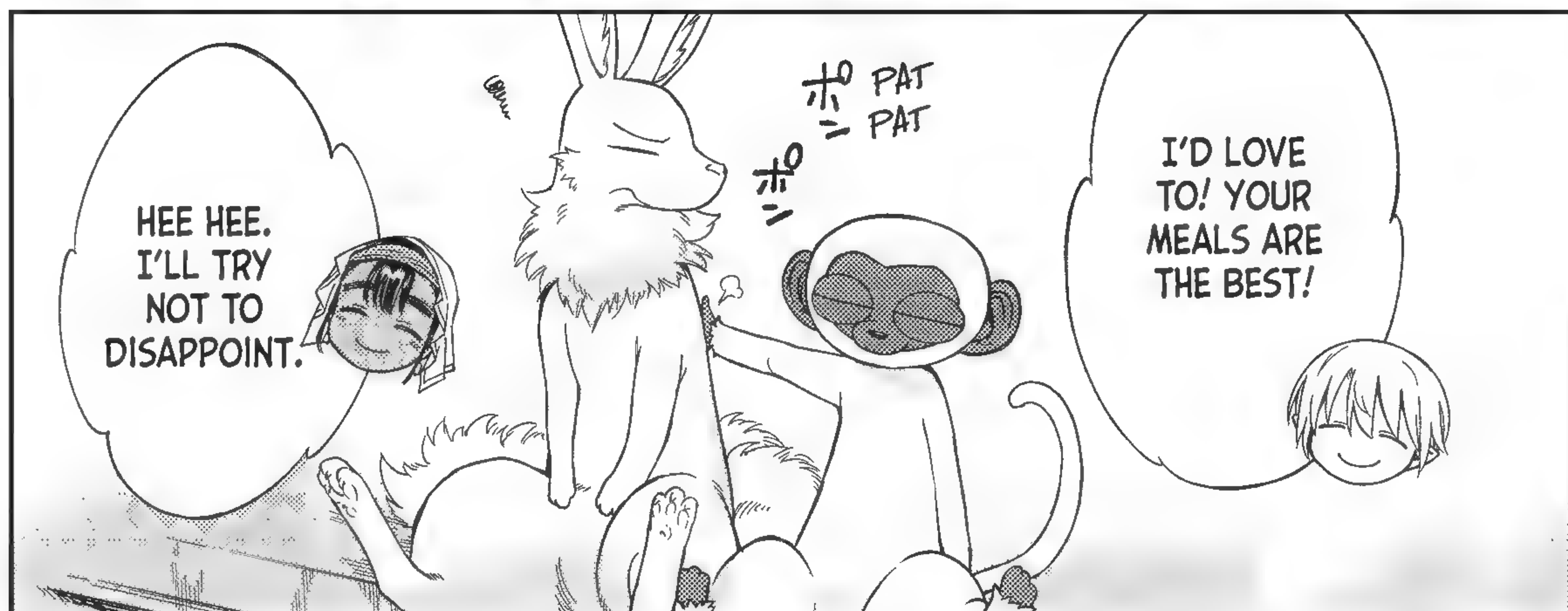














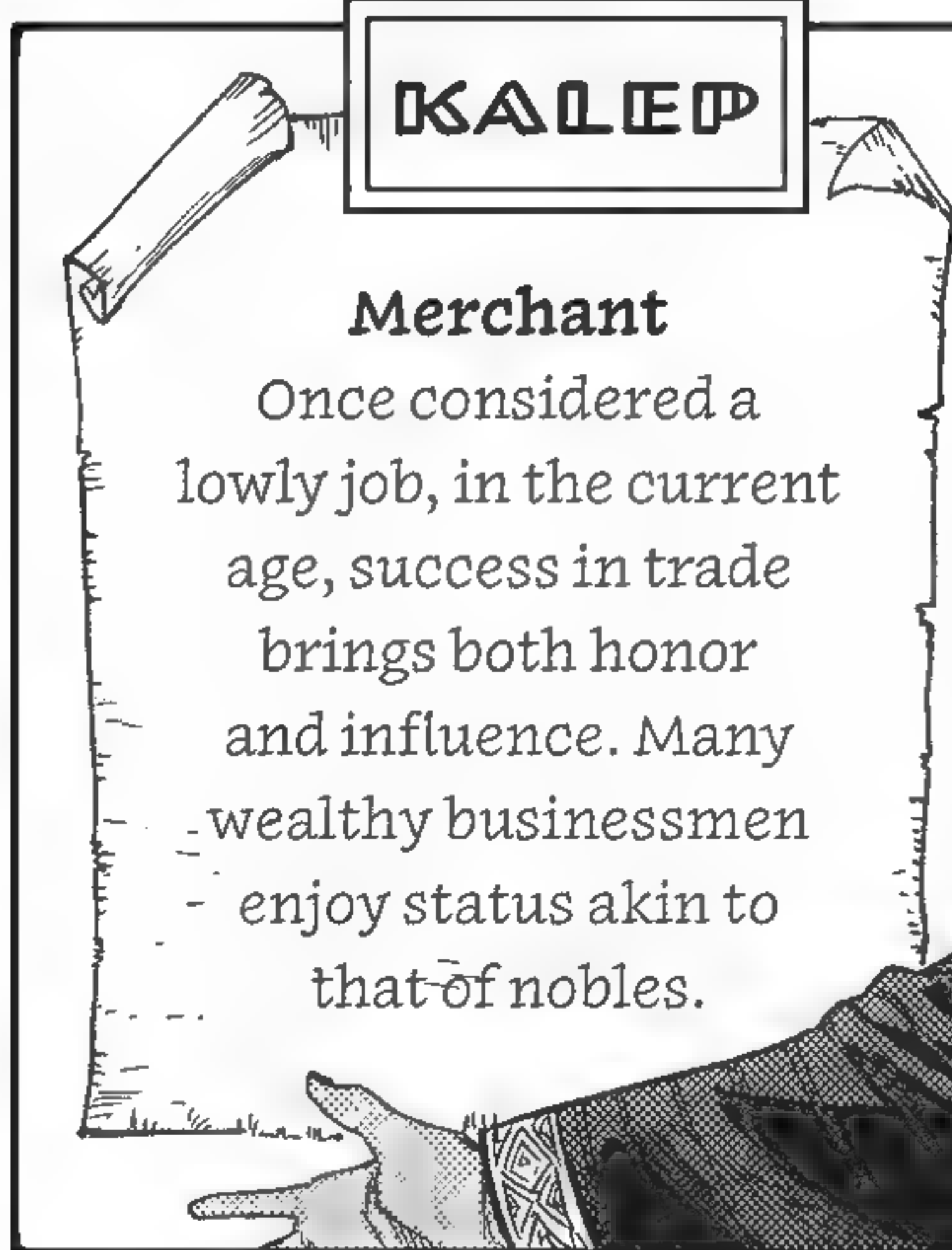


ME?!  
TEACH  
AT THE  
SCHOOL?!



I'M SURE  
YOU'D MAKE  
AN EXCELLENT  
TEACHER.

IF YOU'RE  
PLANNING TO  
SETTLE DOWN IN  
AMUN, PERHAPS  
YOU MIGHT  
CONSIDER  
WORKING AT  
THE SCHOOL?



### KALEP

#### Merchant

Once considered a lowly job, in the current age, success in trade brings both honor and influence. Many wealthy businessmen enjoy status akin to that of nobles.

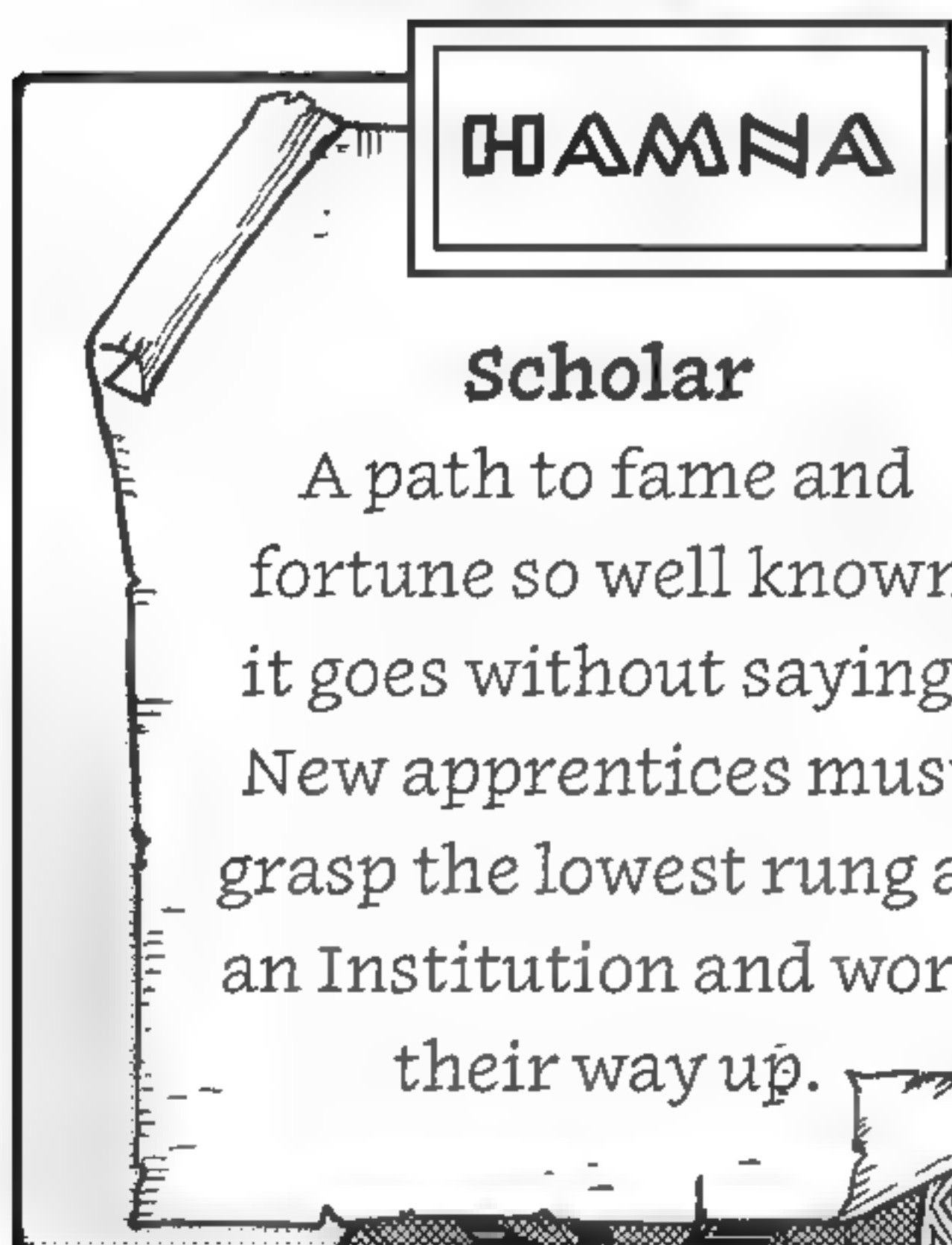


...IF HE'S  
NOT A  
KAFNA,  
I'M GONNA  
MOLD HIM  
INTO A FINE  
MERCHANT!

DON'T YOU  
DARE TRY  
TO GET THE  
JUMP! I  
ALREADY  
TOLD  
YOU...



HOLD IT  
RIGHT  
THERE,  
YOHAM!



### HAMNA

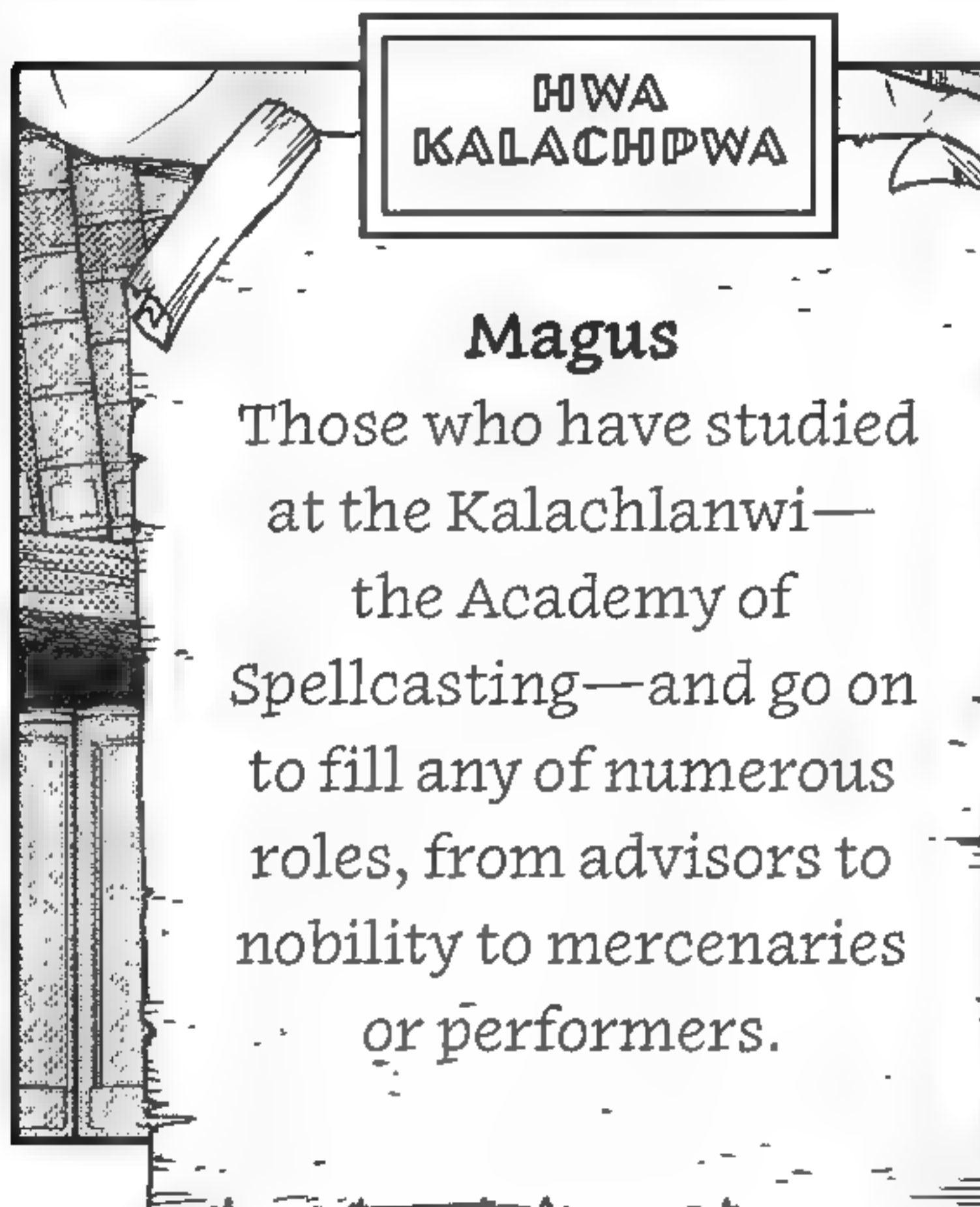
#### Scholar

A path to fame and fortune so well known it goes without saying. New apprentices must grasp the lowest rung at an Institution and work their way up.



YES, I  
THINK  
SO,  
TOO.

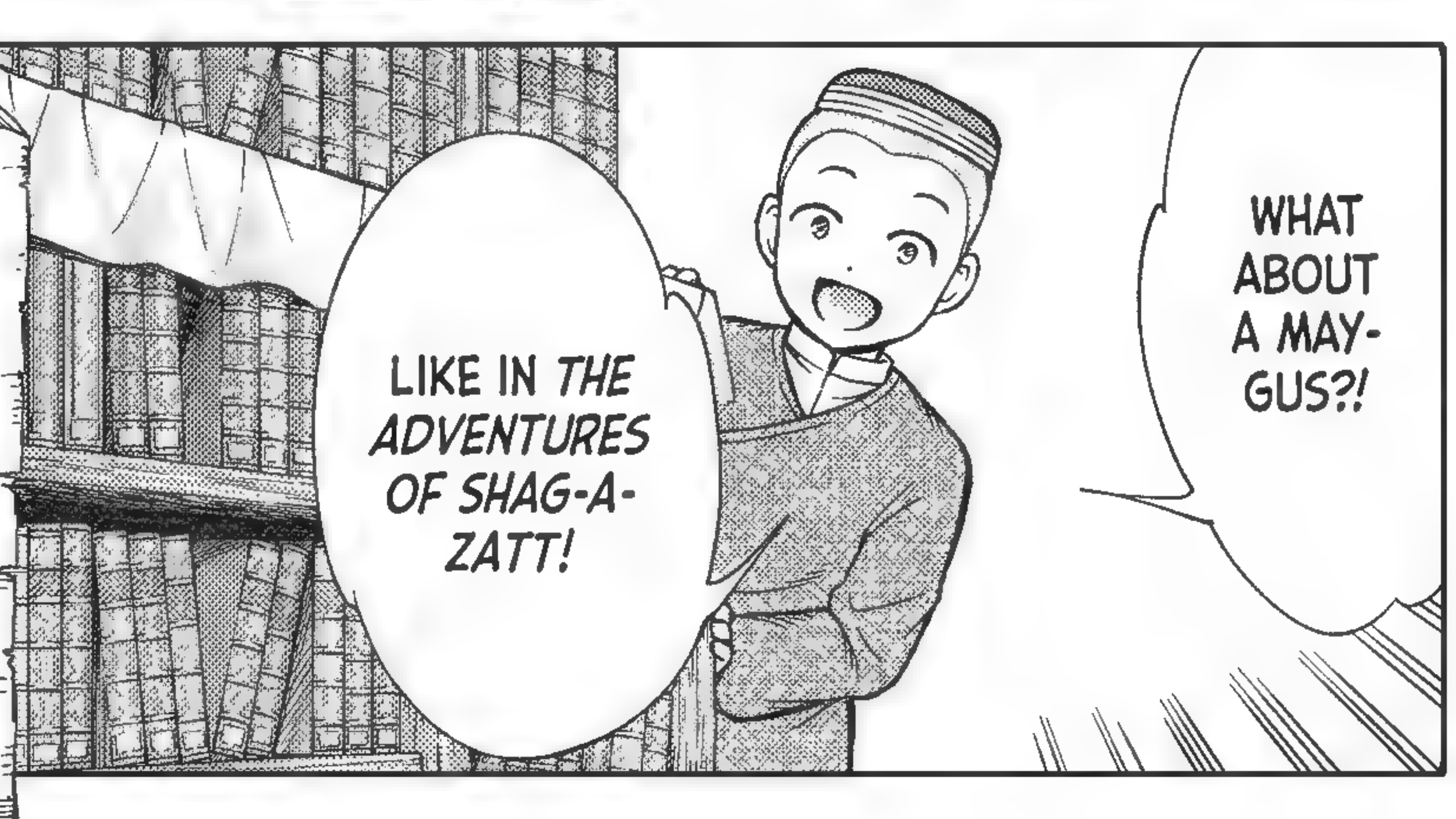
HE STRIKES  
ME AS MORE  
OF THE  
SCHOLARLY  
TYPE.



### HWA KALACHIPWA

#### Magus

Those who have studied at the Kalachlanwi—the Academy of Spellcasting—and go on to fill any of numerous roles, from advisors to nobility to mercenaries or performers.



LIKE IN THE  
ADVENTURES  
OF SHAG-A-  
ZATT!

WHAT  
ABOUT  
A MAY-  
GUS?!

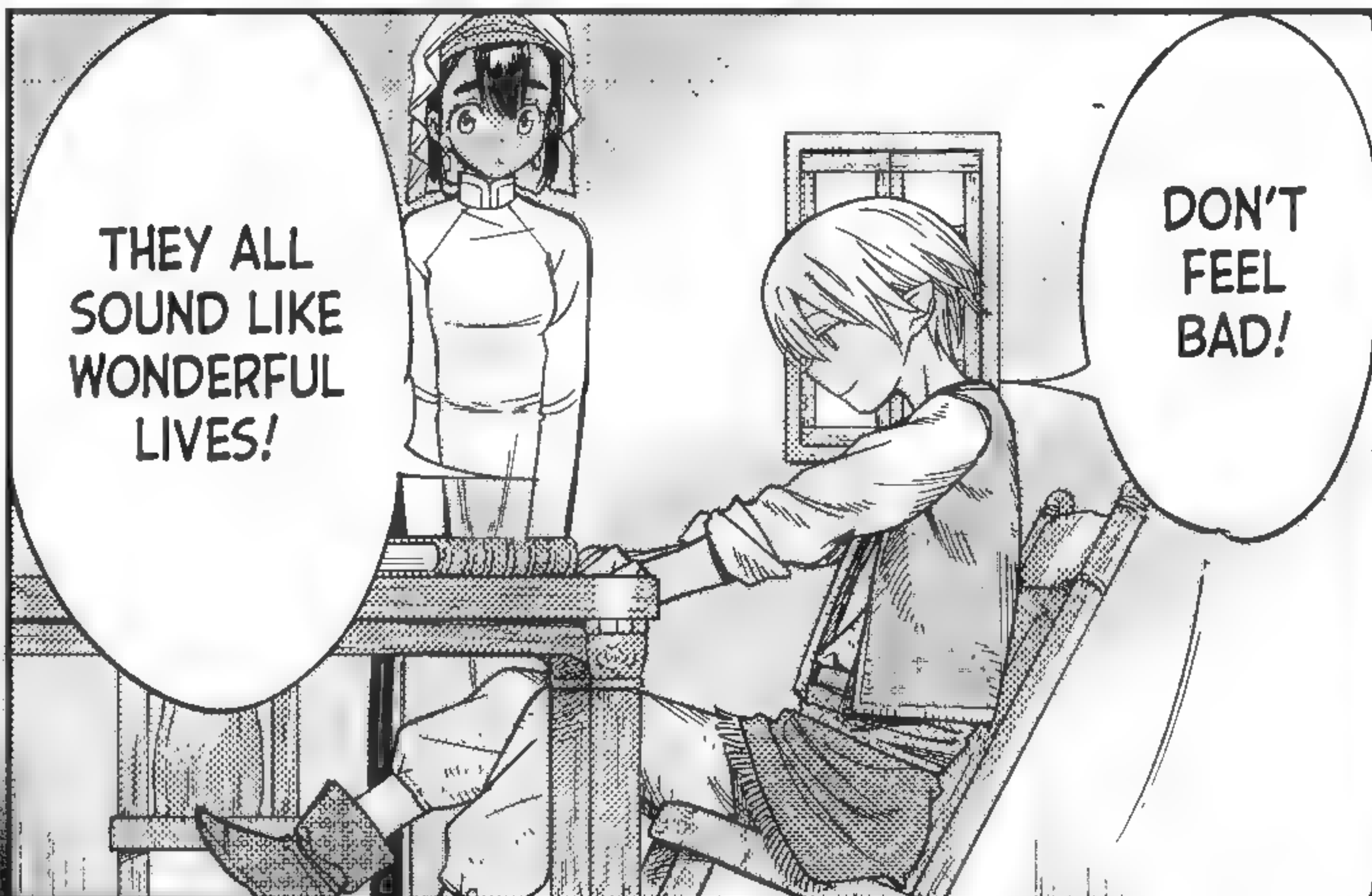




CHATTER











...IT  
WAS  
FINE.



I JUST  
WANNA  
WORK  
BESIDE  
YOU.

I...



DID  
SOMEONE  
MAKE FUN  
OF YOU?!



I DON'T  
HAVE TO  
STUDY  
TO FIND  
WORK.

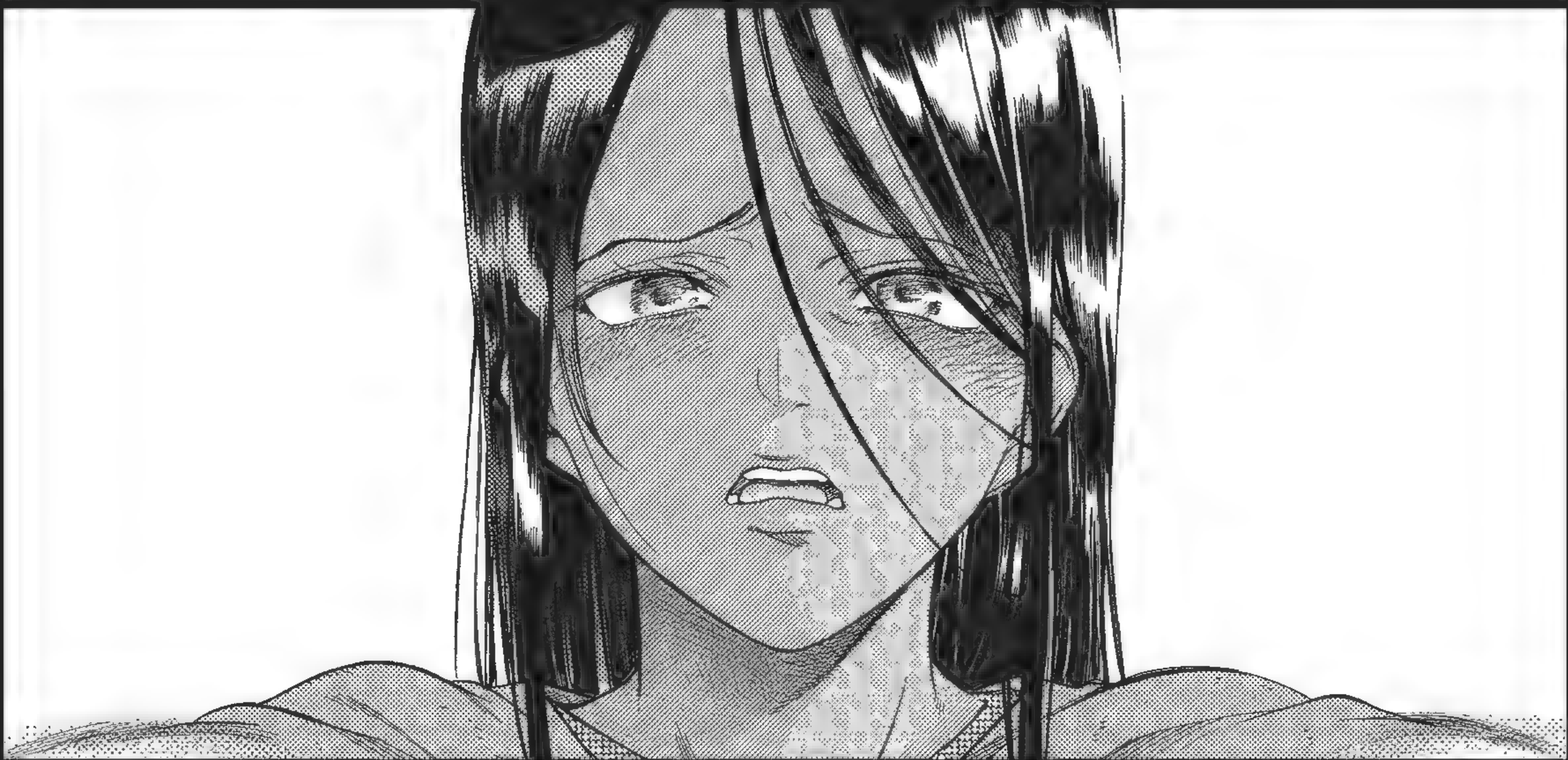
WHY DO  
I HAVE  
TO GO TO  
SCHOOL?



TIFA?

WHAT'S THE  
POINT OF  
STUDYING?

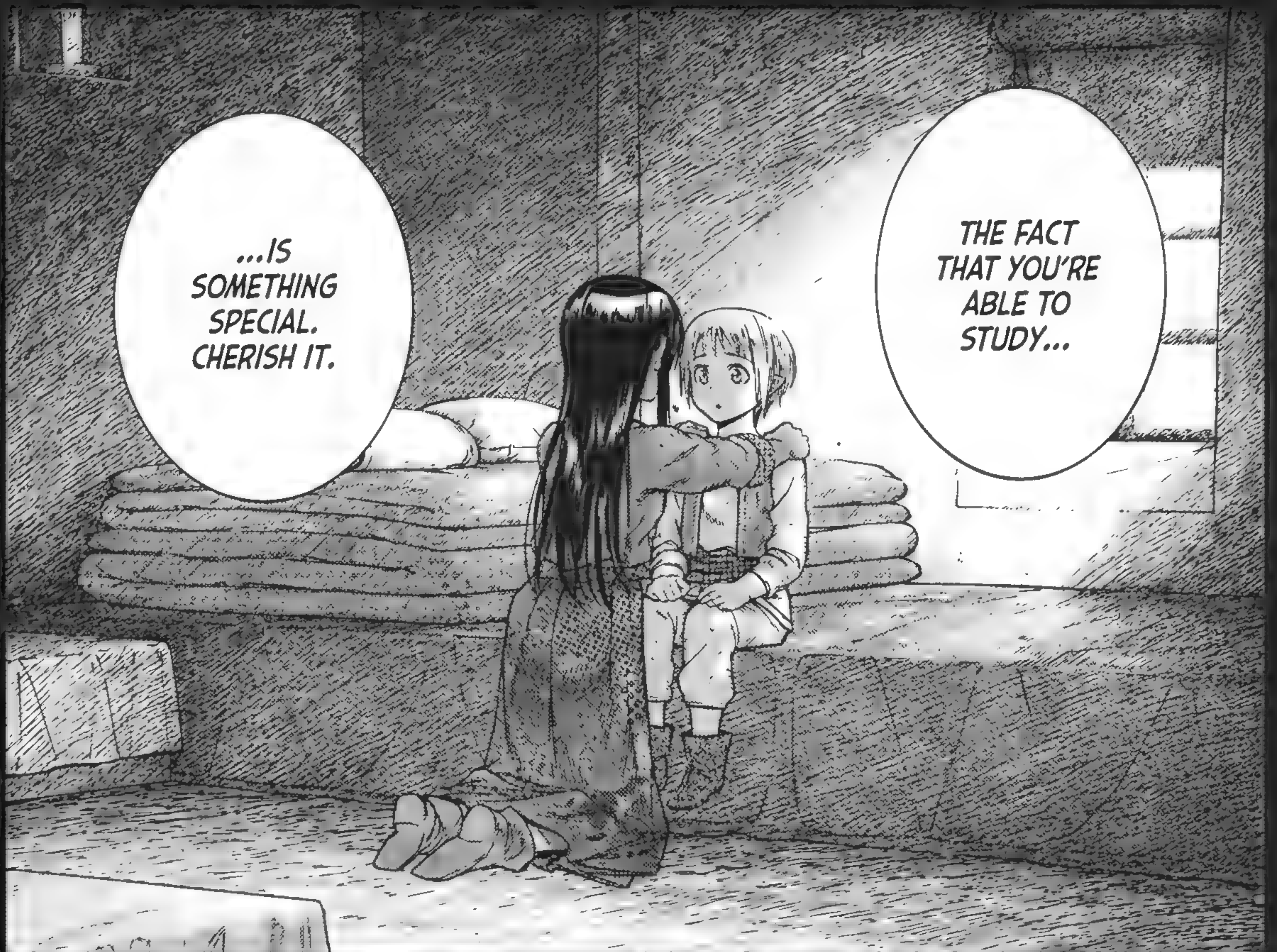












...IS  
SOMETHING  
SPECIAL.  
CHERISH IT.

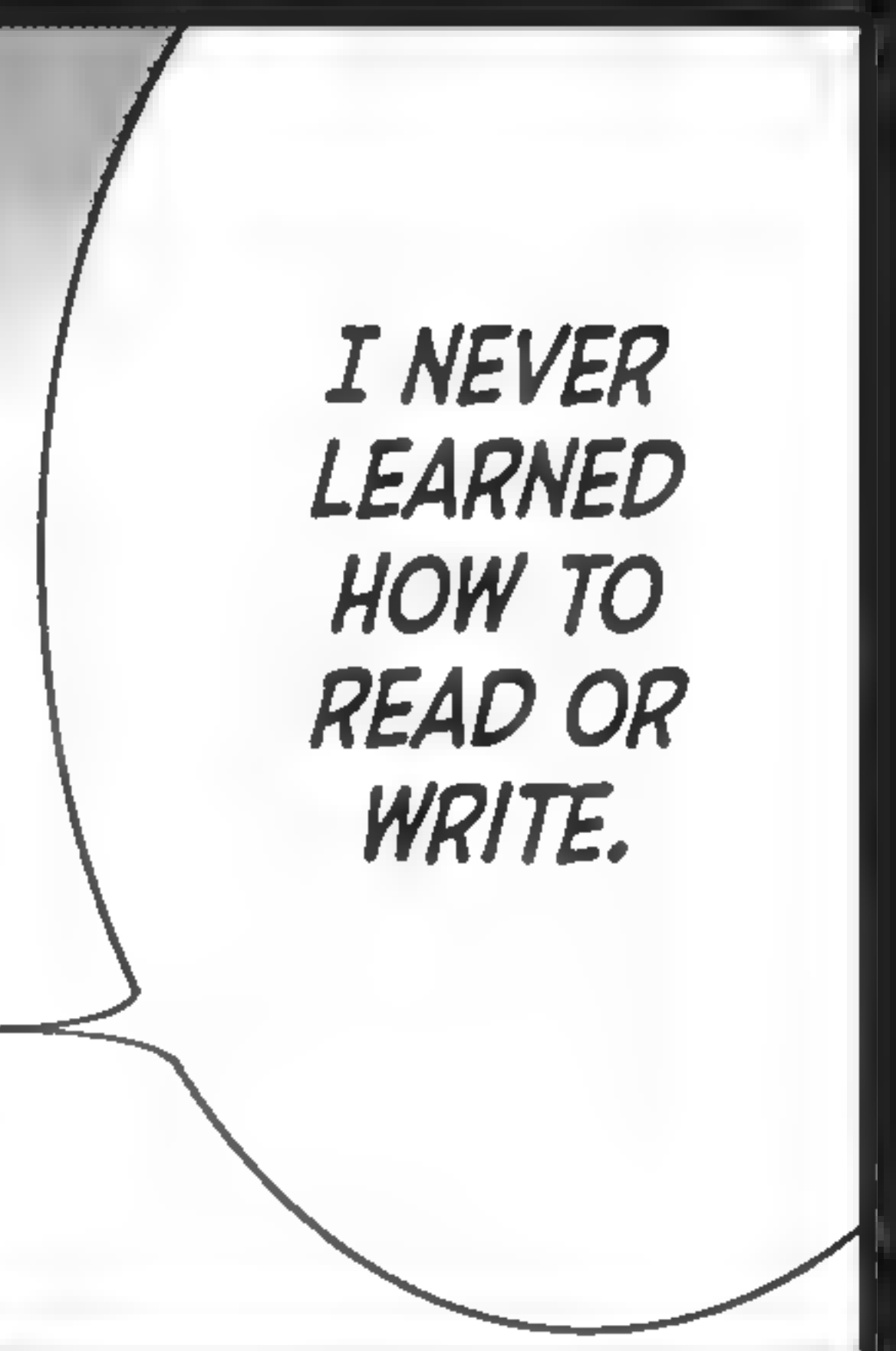
THE FACT  
THAT YOU'RE  
ABLE TO  
STUDY...



STUDYING  
IS LIKE...



I WANT  
YOU TO  
HAVE THE  
CHOICES IN  
LIFE THAT  
I NEVER  
HAD IN  
MINE.



I NEVER  
LEARNED  
HOW TO  
READ OR  
WRITE.



EVEN AS AN  
ADULT, YOU  
MIGHT LOOK  
BACK AND  
REALIZE ALL  
THAT YOU DID  
NOT NEED.

YOU LEARN  
THINGS THAT  
YOU MIGHT  
NEVER FIND  
A USE FOR.

IT'S LIKE  
BEING IN  
A FOG AT  
FIRST. YOU'RE  
SURROUNDED,  
AND NOTHING  
MAKES SENSE.





THEY  
WON'T  
COME TO  
YOU.

YOU  
HAVE TO  
WORK  
WITH ALL  
YOUR  
HEART  
TO FIND  
THEM.



BUT  
SOMEWHERE  
AMONG THAT  
UNCERTAIN  
HAZE...

...YOU'LL  
FIND JOYS  
BEYOND  
ANYTHING  
YOU'VE EVER  
IMAGINED.  
LOTS OF  
THEM.



...OR KNOW WHERE  
YOU'RE HEADED.

JUST  
DEDICATE  
EVERYTHING  
YOU HAVE TO  
THE THINGS  
RIGHT IN  
FRONT OF  
YOU...

YOU  
NEEDN'T  
CHOOSE...

GRAB ON TO  
WHATEVER'S  
THERE AND  
WORK WITH  
ALL YOUR  
HEART.



...AND  
ONE DAY  
REALIZE  
YOU'VE  
BECOME  
A PERSON  
YOU  
WANTED  
TO BE.

WHEN YOU  
DO, LOOK  
BACK AND  
SEE.



...AND  
ONE BY  
ONE...

...YOU'LL  
SEE YOUR  
EFFORTS  
STACK...



BECAUSE ON THAT  
DAY, I KNOW  
YOU'LL FIND...

...THE WHOLE WORLD  
STRETCHED OUT  
BEFORE YOU.

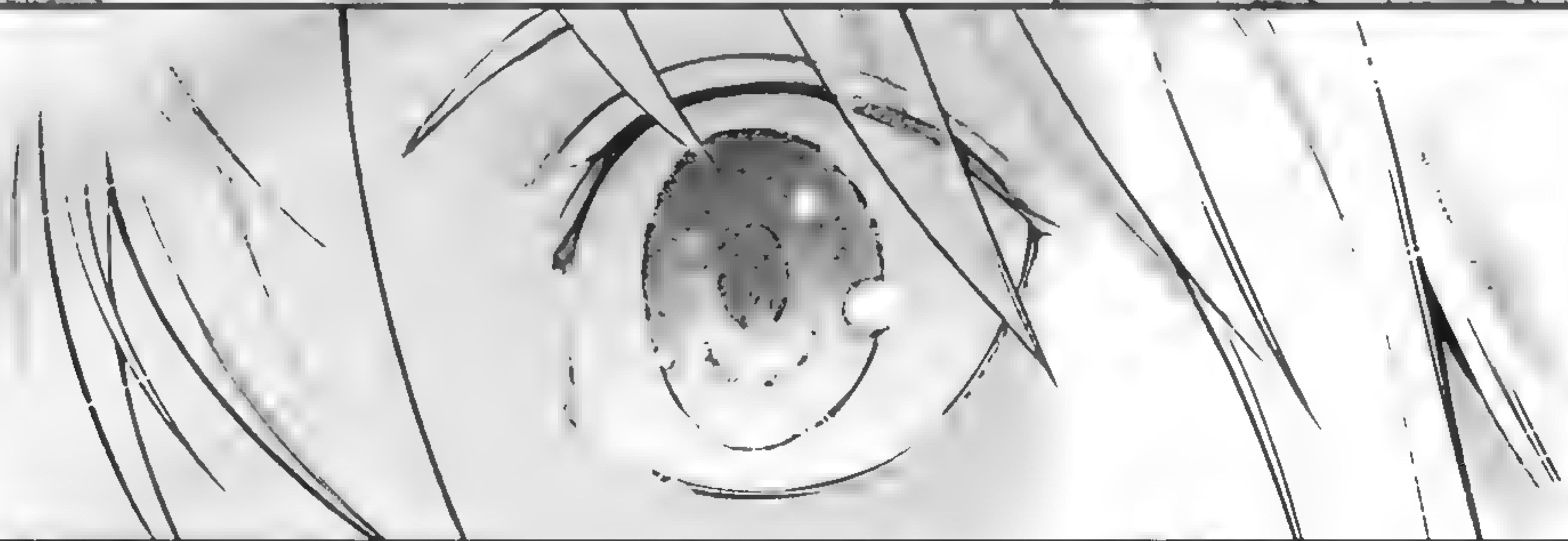




IF YOU LEARN  
TO UNLOCK THE  
SECRETS OF  
BOOKS...

AND THAT YOU'LL  
HAVE SO MANY PATHS  
TO CHOOSE FROM.

...YOU  
CAN CARRY  
YOURSELF TO  
ANY PLACE  
YOU WISH TO  
GO.



I'M  
FINALLY  
THERE.

I CAN  
BECOME  
WHATEVER  
I WANT  
TO BE.





AND... IF I ASK  
MYSELF WHAT I  
TRULY WANT...

...IT'S  
THE FACT  
THAT I CAN  
CHOOSE  
THAT MAKES  
IT CLEAR.

...AS I MADE  
FOR MYSELF  
IN THE PAST.

I HAVE AS  
MANY WAYS  
FORWARD...

I WANT  
TO GIVE  
BACK  
TO THE  
BOOKS.

I'M  
THEO  
FUMIS!

THAT'S  
ME!

I HOPE YOU  
DON'T MIND MY  
CONVEYING IT  
WITH EVERYONE  
HERE IN  
ATTENDANCE.

RUMMAGE  
RUMMAGE

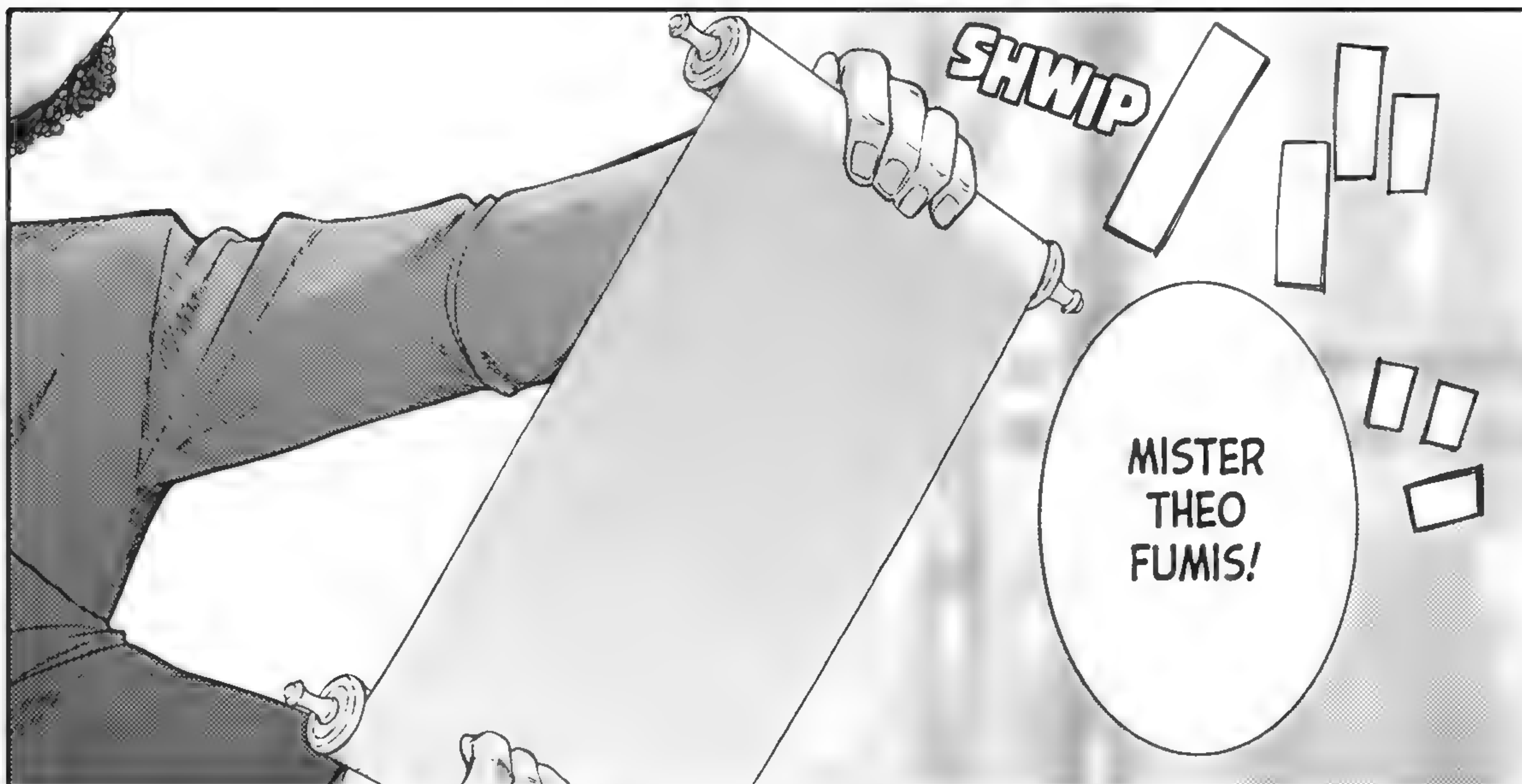
I HAVE A  
MESSAGE  
FOR YOU.

I WAS  
TOLD HE  
MIGHT BE  
AT THE  
LIBRARY.

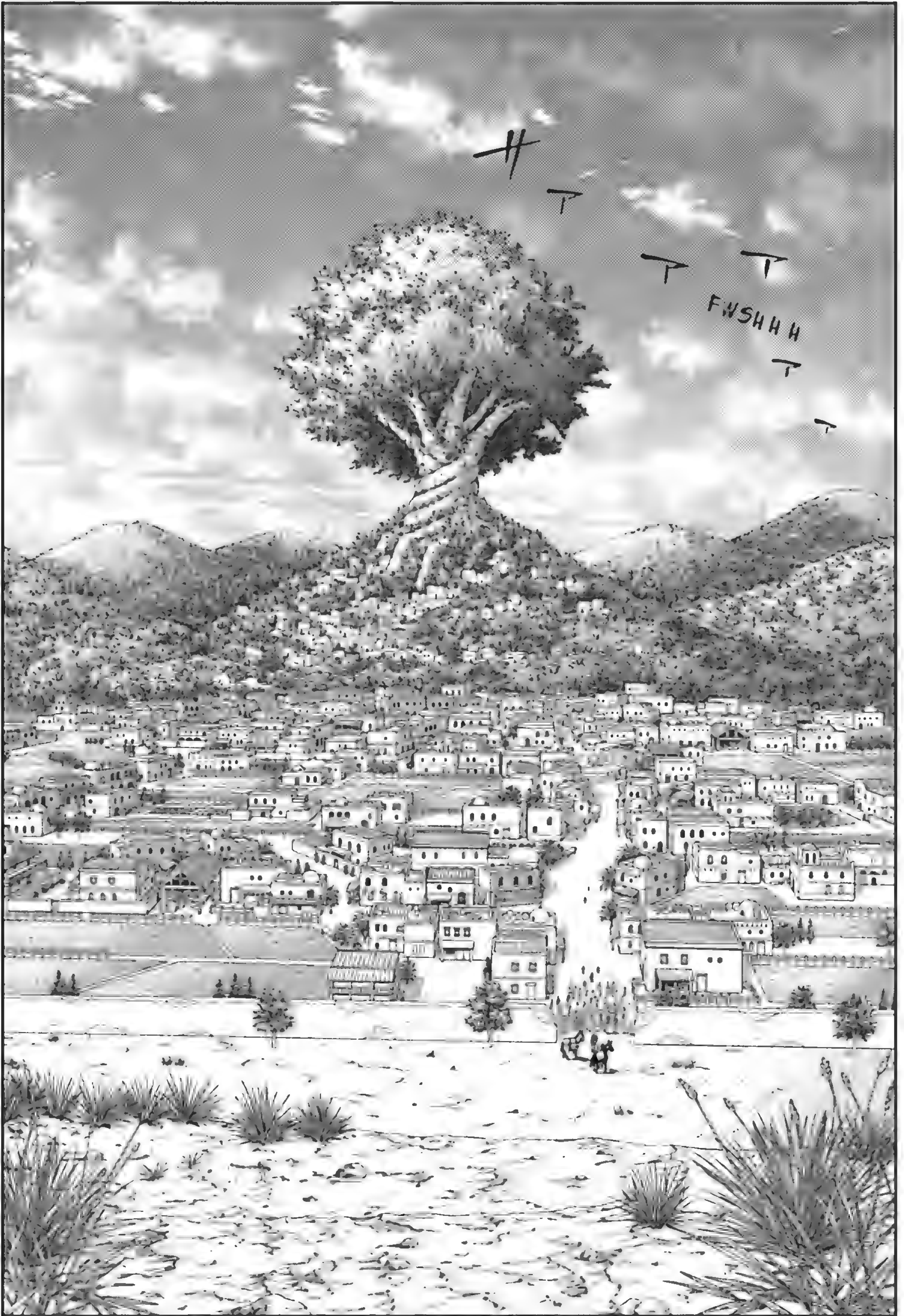
PARDON  
ME.

WOULD A  
MISTER THEO  
FUMIS HAPPEN  
TO BE HERE?

















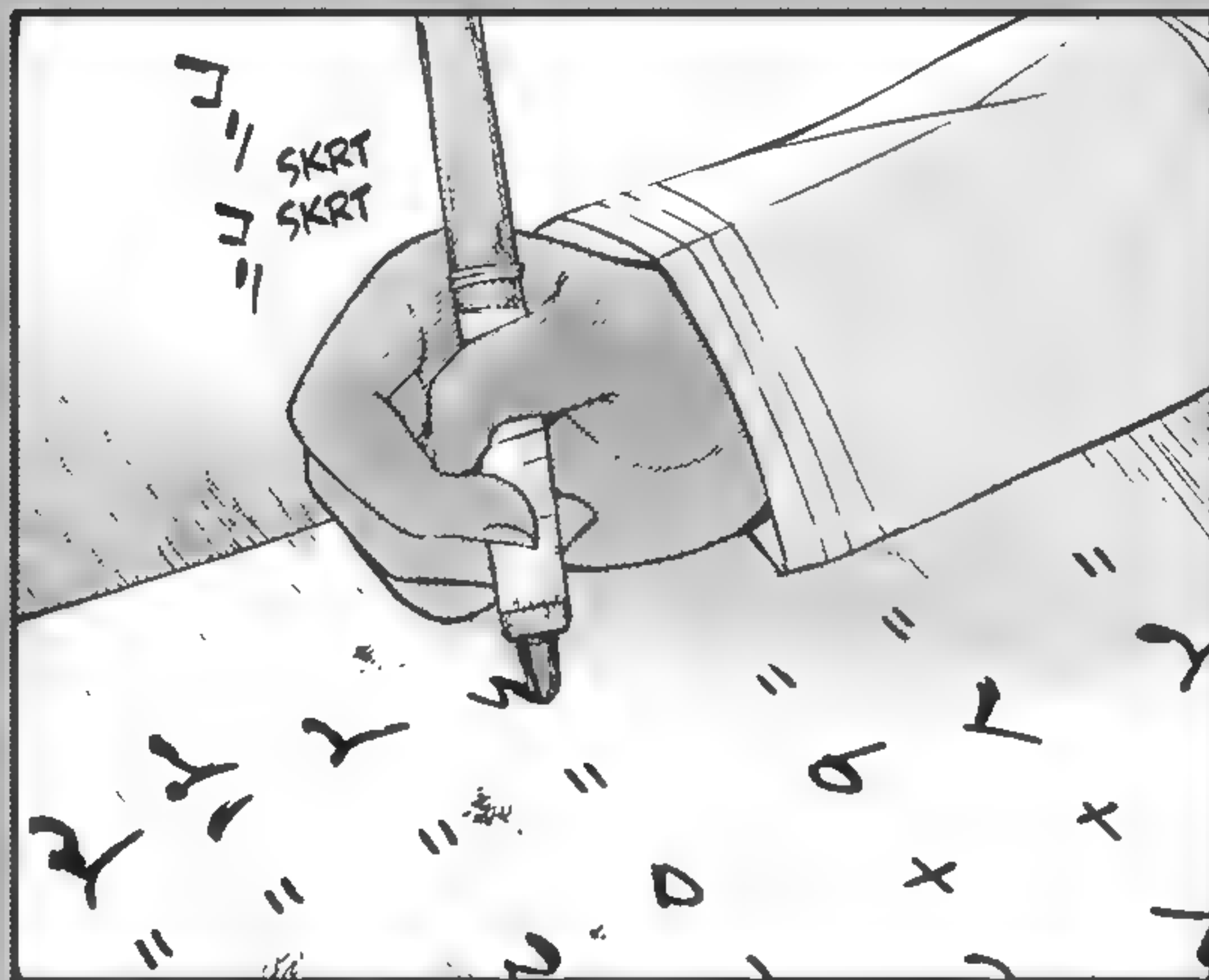




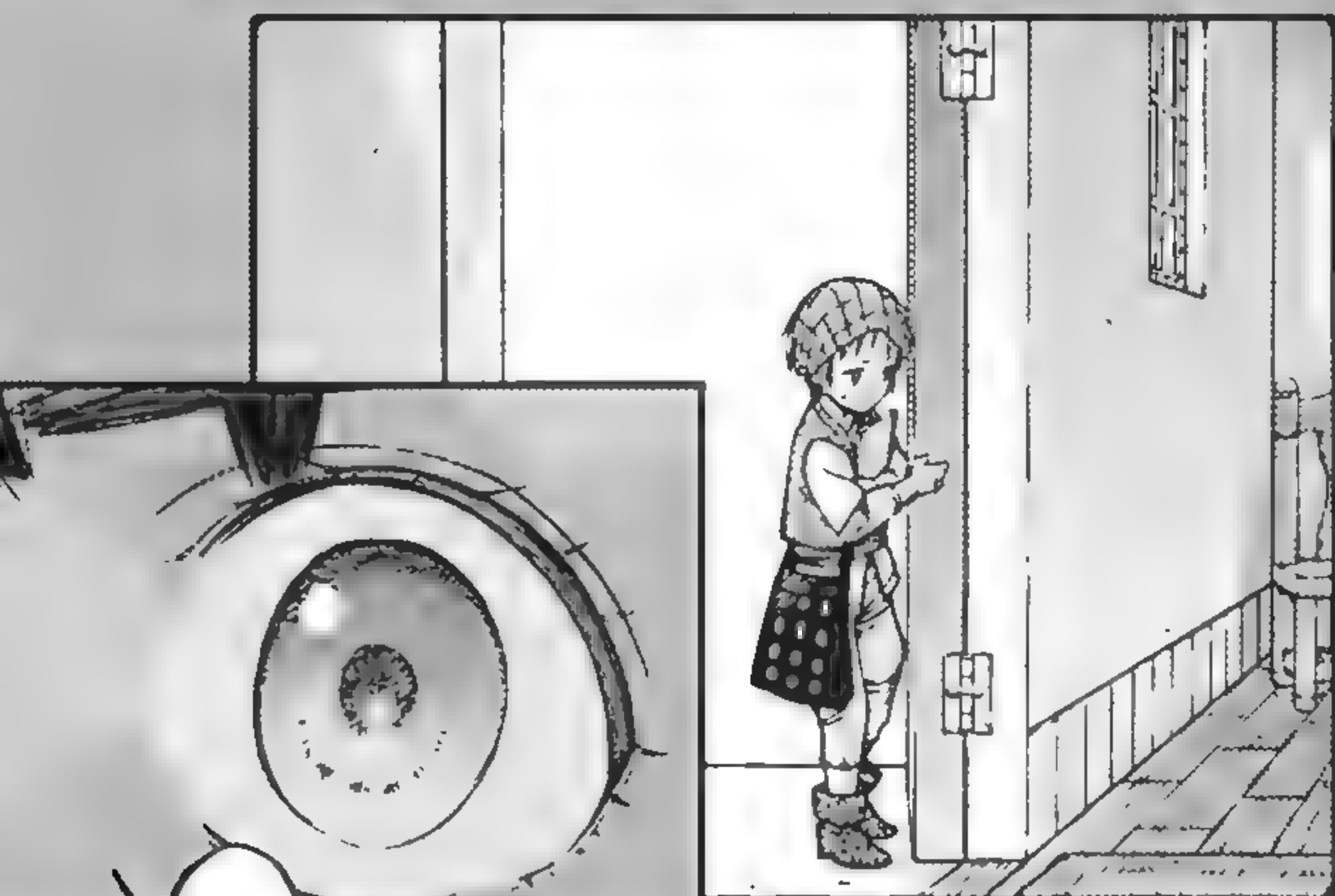
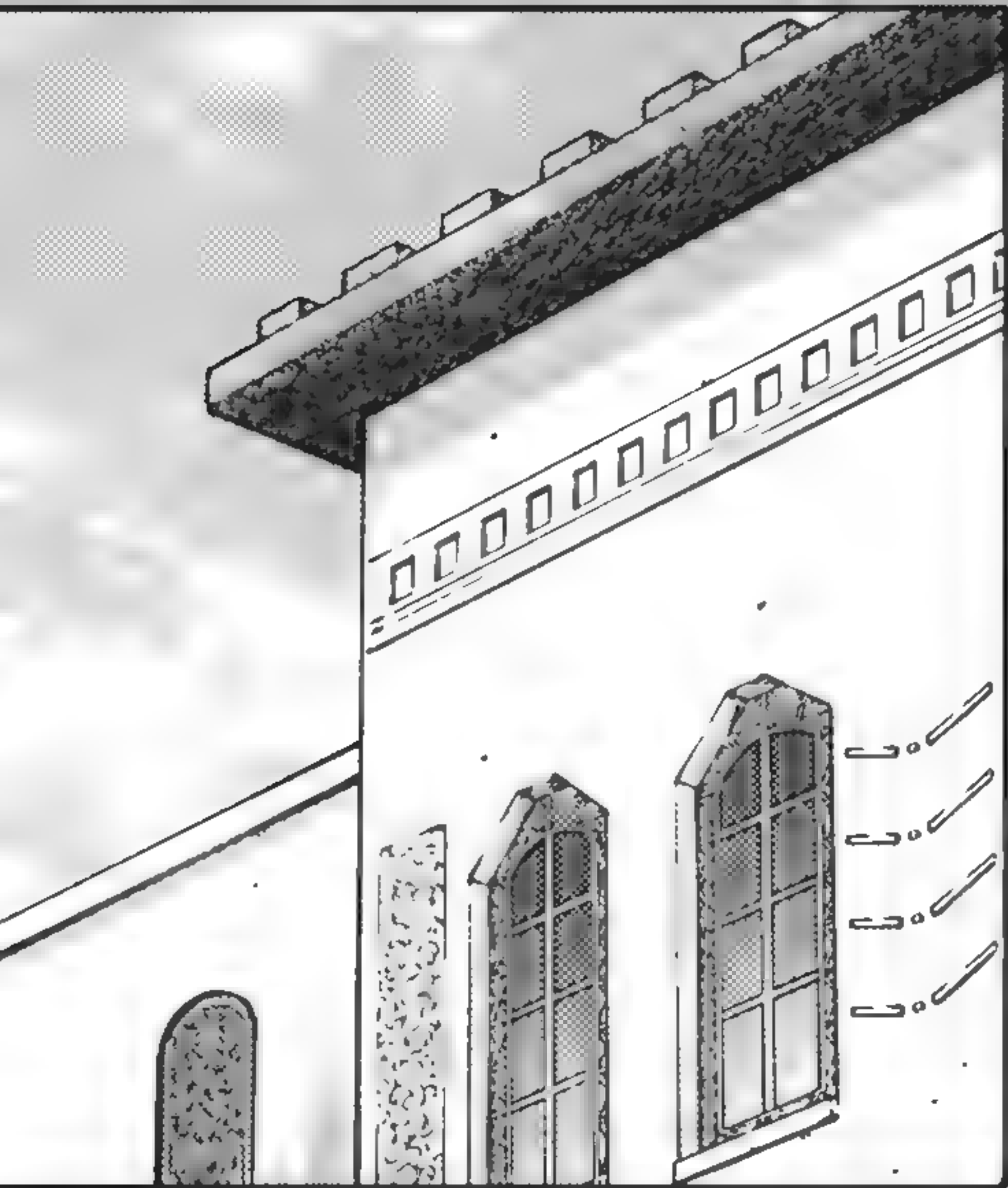




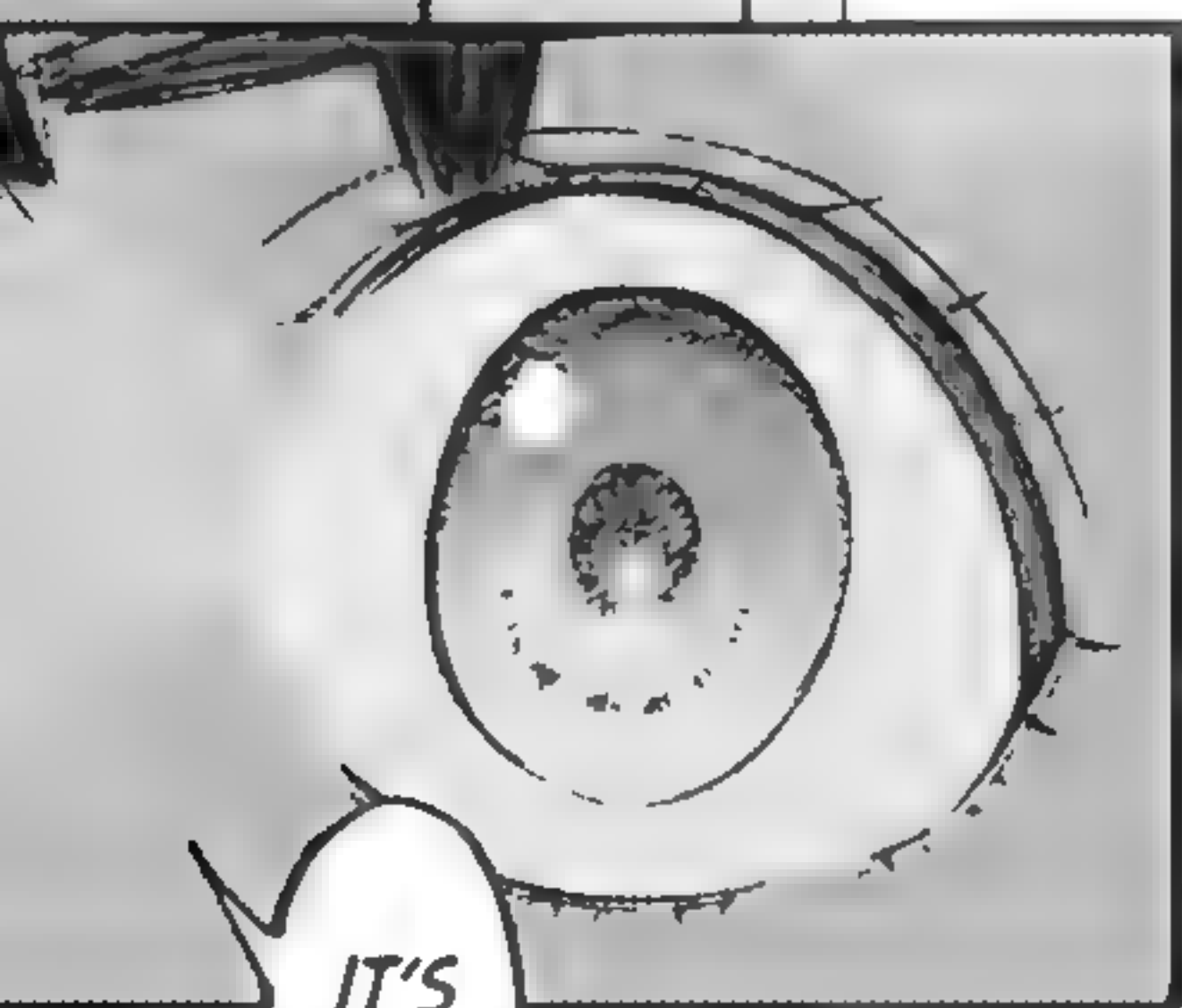








HMM...  
WHAT  
SHOULD  
I READ  
TODAY?



IT'S  
...!



IT'S THE  
LONG-  
EARED  
BOY!

DADDY SAID  
I HAVE TO  
STAY FAR  
AWAY FROM  
HIM.

AT LEAST,  
I THINK  
THAT'S  
WHAT THEY  
CALL HIM...





WHAT'S THE MATTER?

EEP!

TROT  
TROT

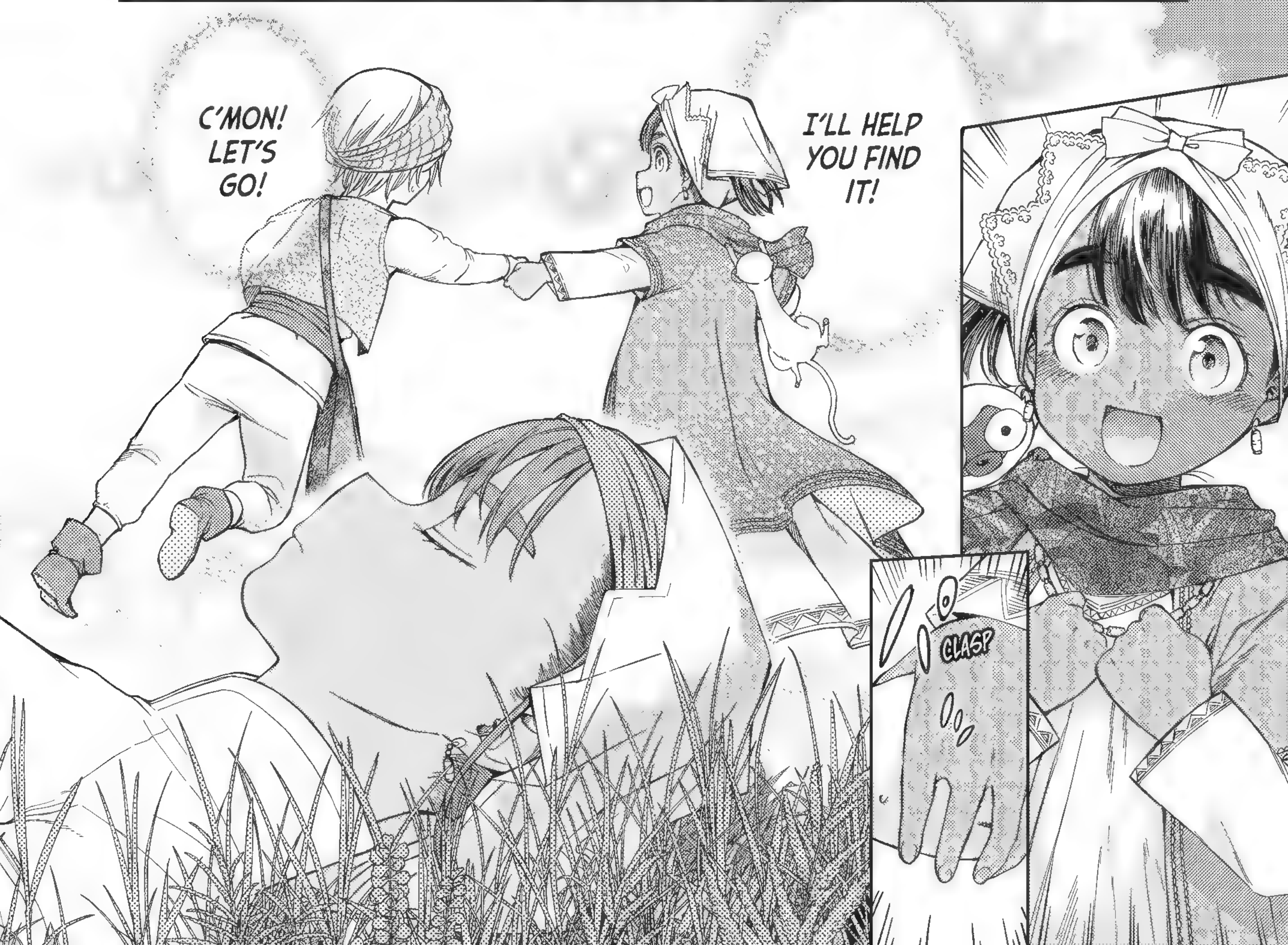


...REALLY WANNA KNOW HOW THE REST OF IT GOES.

...BUT ONLY PART OF IT'S IN THERE, AND I...

THERE'S THIS STORY IN MY HYRON TEXTBOOK...

UM, SEE...



C'MON! LET'S GO!

I'LL HELP YOU FIND IT!



CLASP







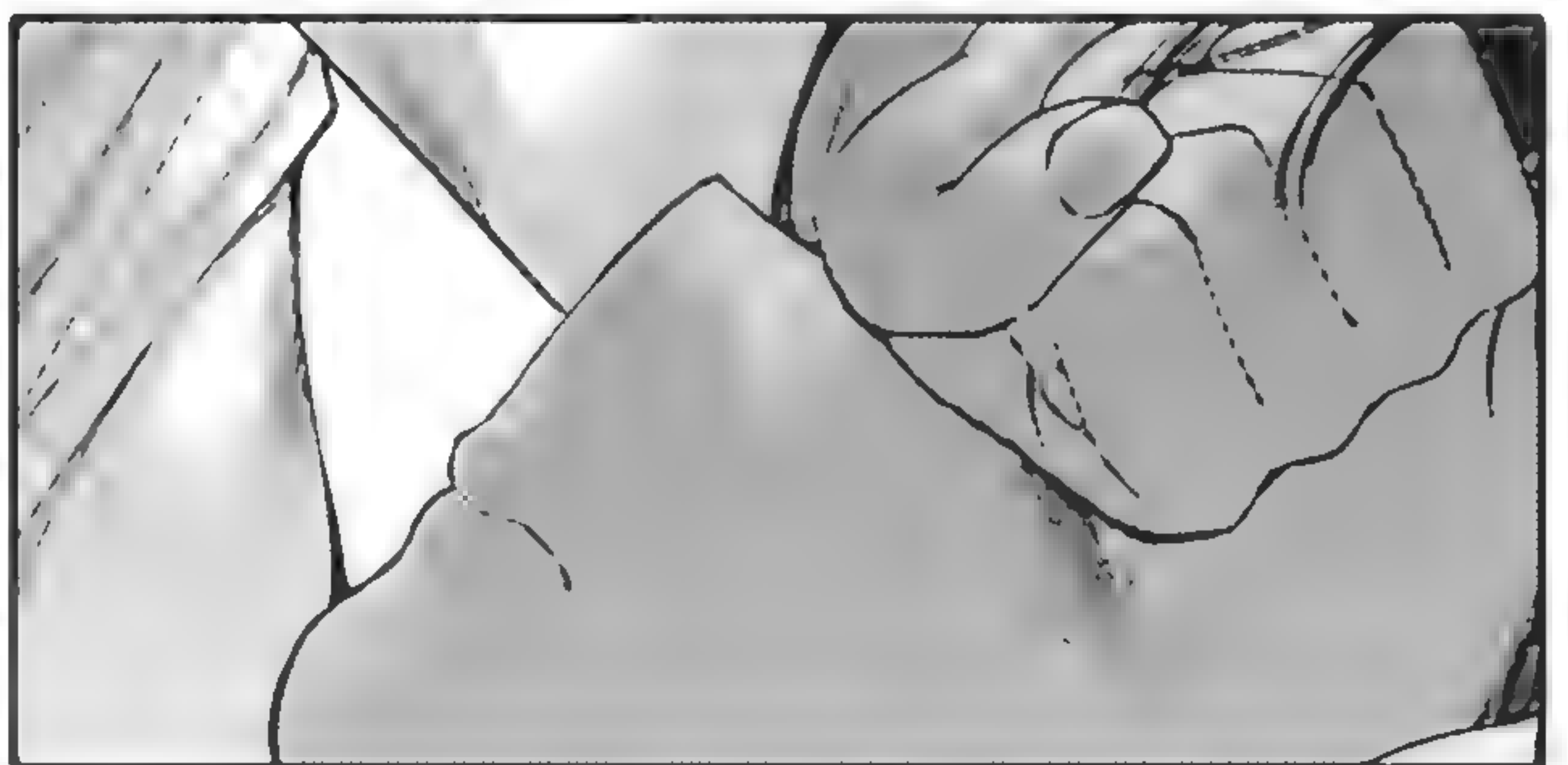


I WANTED HIM  
HERE IN THE  
VILLAGE.

THAT WAY,  
WE'D BE  
TOGETHER  
FOREVER.



THEO  
CAN'T STAY  
HERE. HE'S  
BIGGER  
THAN THIS  
PLACE.



...BUT  
I GET  
IT.







KUKUO!  
I NEED  
YOUR  
HELP!



I'VE  
ALWAYS  
KNOWN  
IT.

HE'S  
MEANT TO  
ACCOMPLISH  
SOMETHING  
GREAT OUT  
THERE.



B  
W  
U  
#  
#!

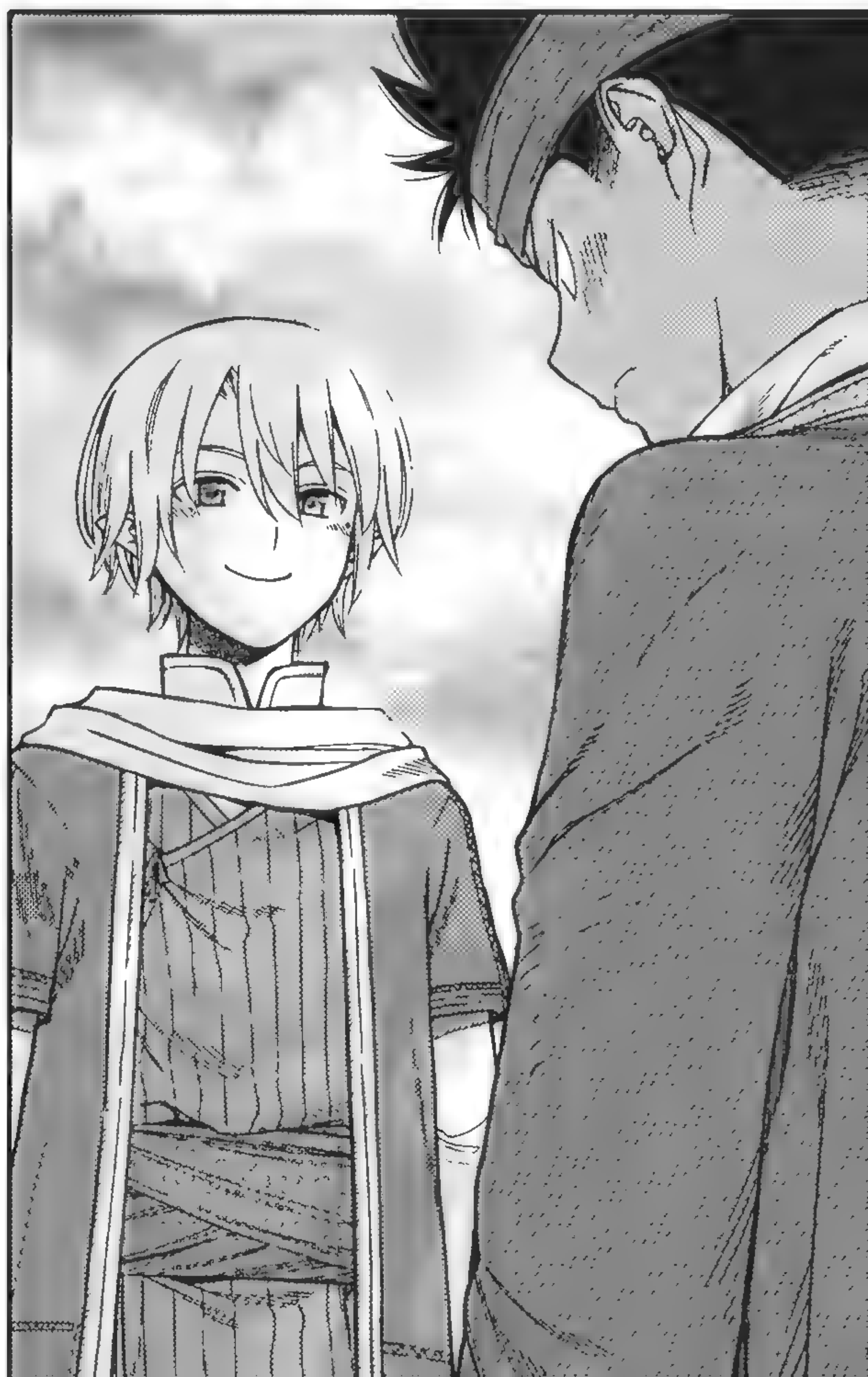
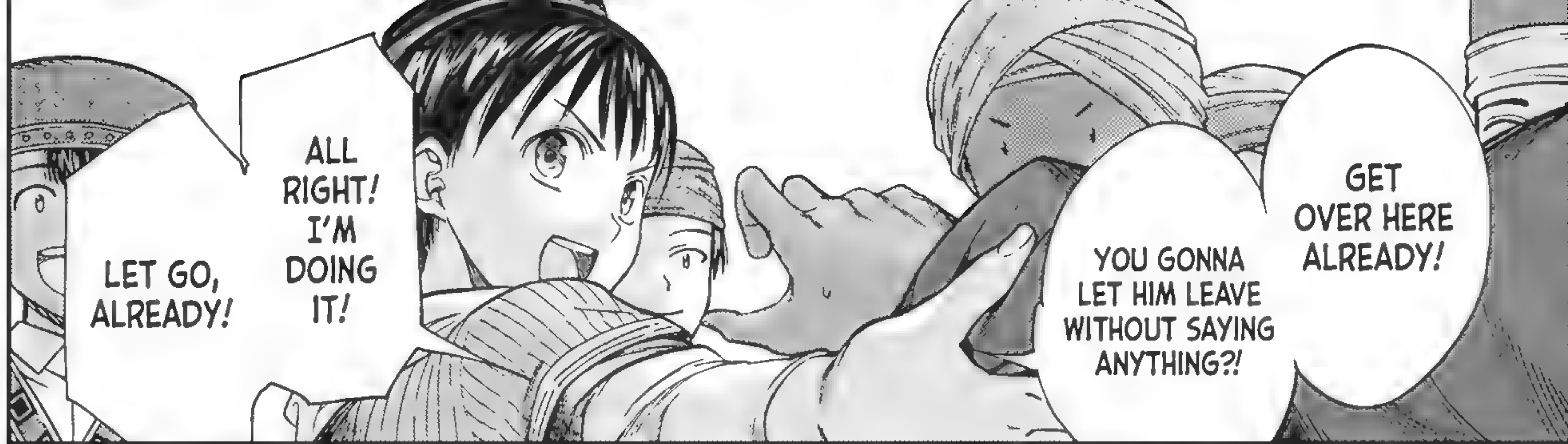


BEFORE  
HE'S  
GONE...

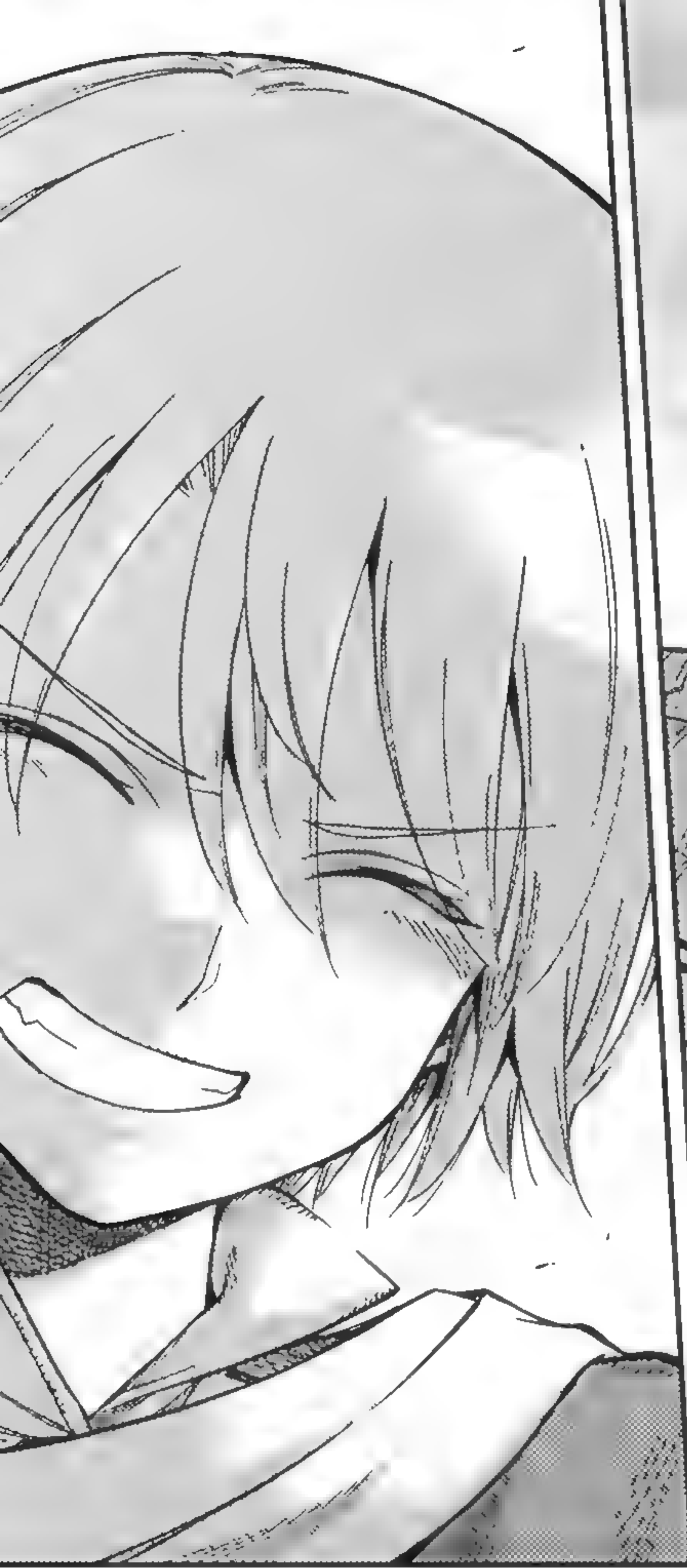


...I NEED HIM  
TO KNOW HOW I  
REALLY FEEL.



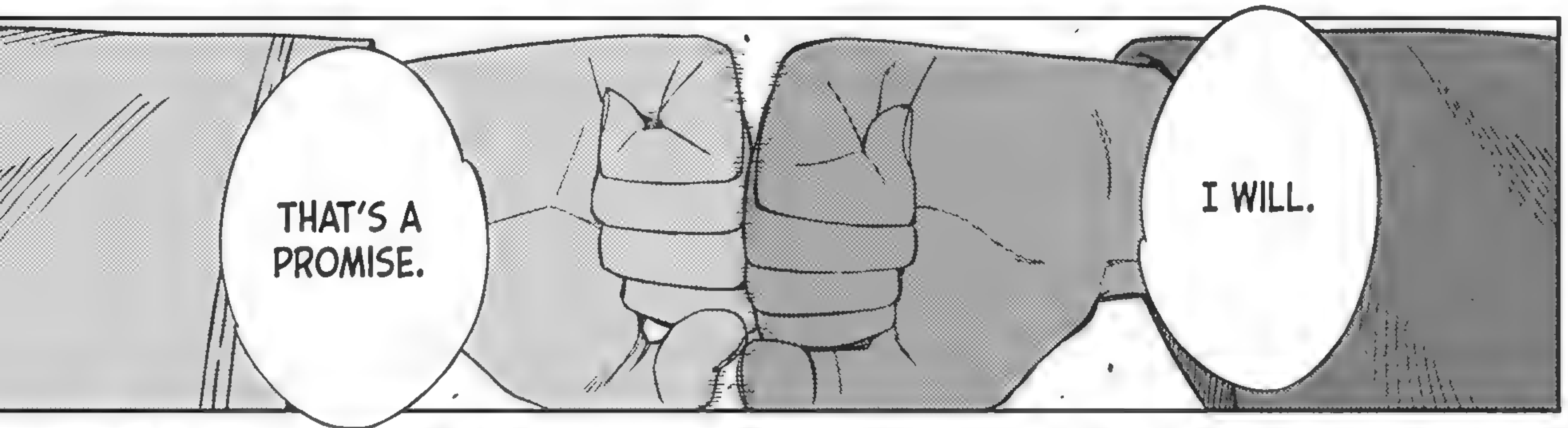






SEE THAT  
EVERYONE  
OUT THERE  
READS MY  
BOOKS!

AND THAT  
MEANS YOU  
BETTER BE  
THE BEST  
KAFNA!

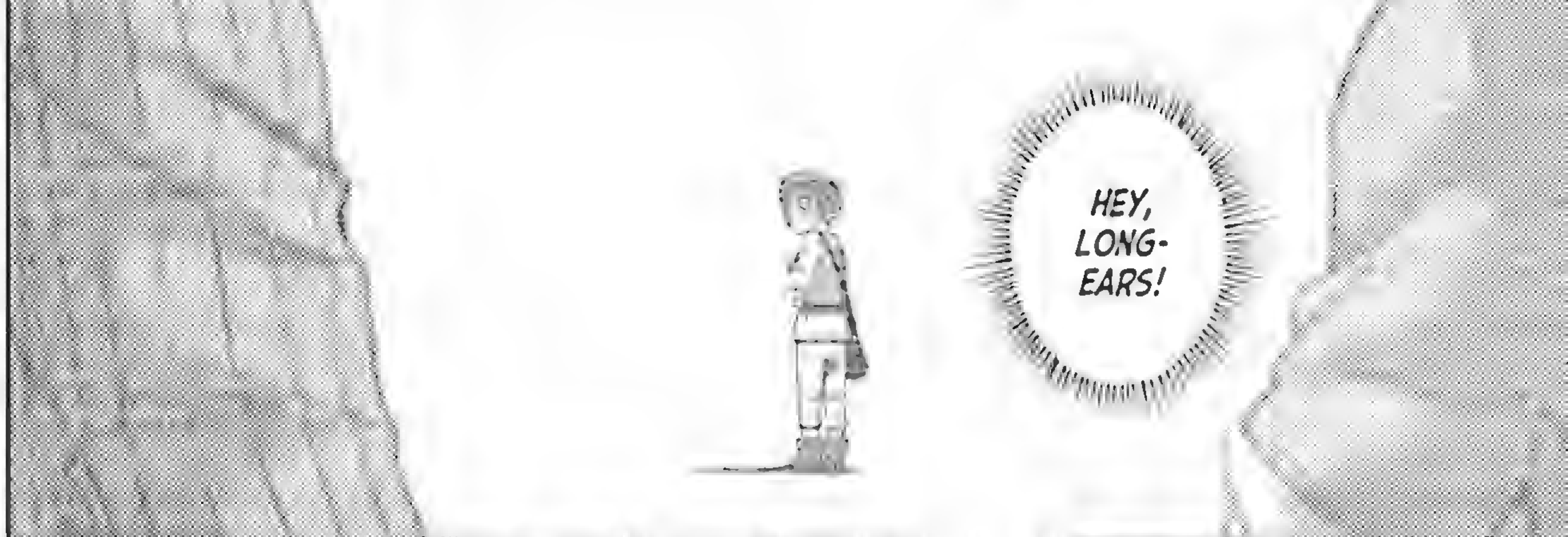


THAT'S A  
PROMISE.

I WILL.







HEY,  
LONG-  
EARS!



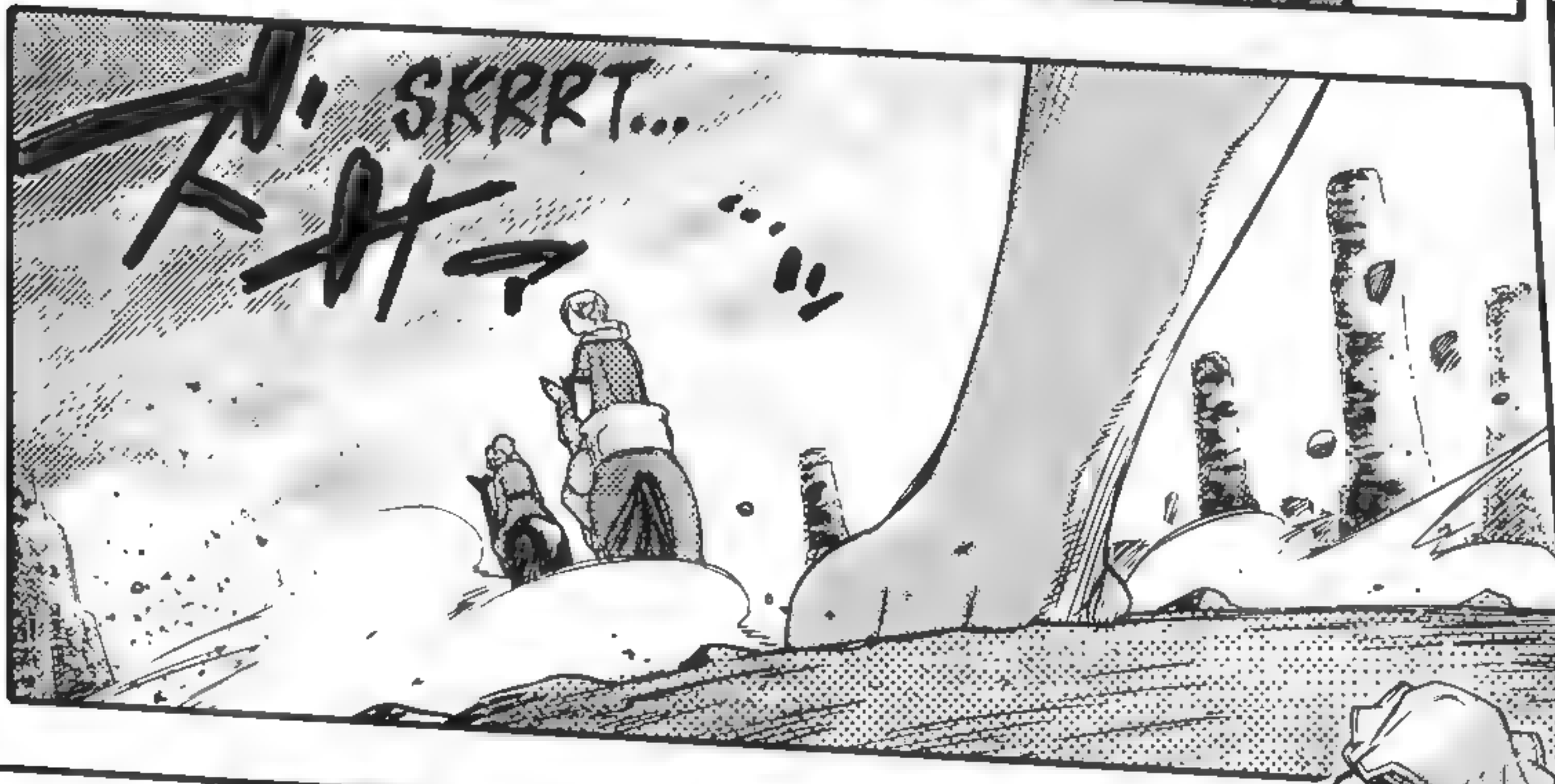
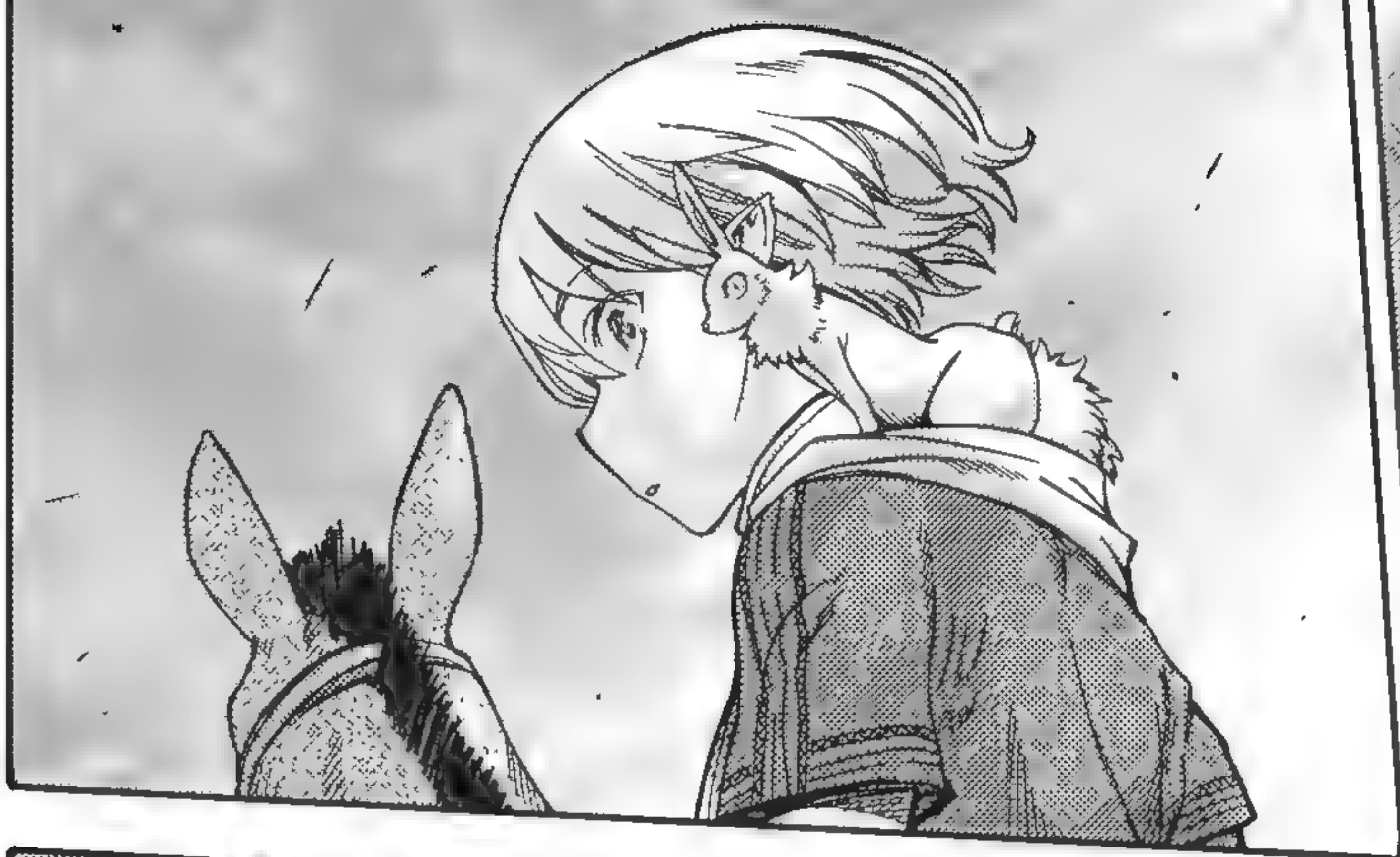
I DID IT,  
SEDONA.



I MANAGED...

...TO CHANGE  
THE WORLD.







...PRAYING  
FOR YOUR  
SUCCESS...

...I  
PROMISE  
YOU, I'LL  
BE THE ONE  
LEADING  
THE CHEER!

NO  
MATTER  
WHO ELSE  
IS OUT  
THERE...

WHEREVER  
YOU  
ARE, I'LL  
ALWAYS BE  
CHEERING  
YOU ON!



NOT  
YET!

I'M  
ALMOST  
FINISHED!

CAN I  
TURN THE  
PAGE?

GUESS WHAT,  
THEO? WE GOT  
THE LATEST  
SHAGRAZZAT!

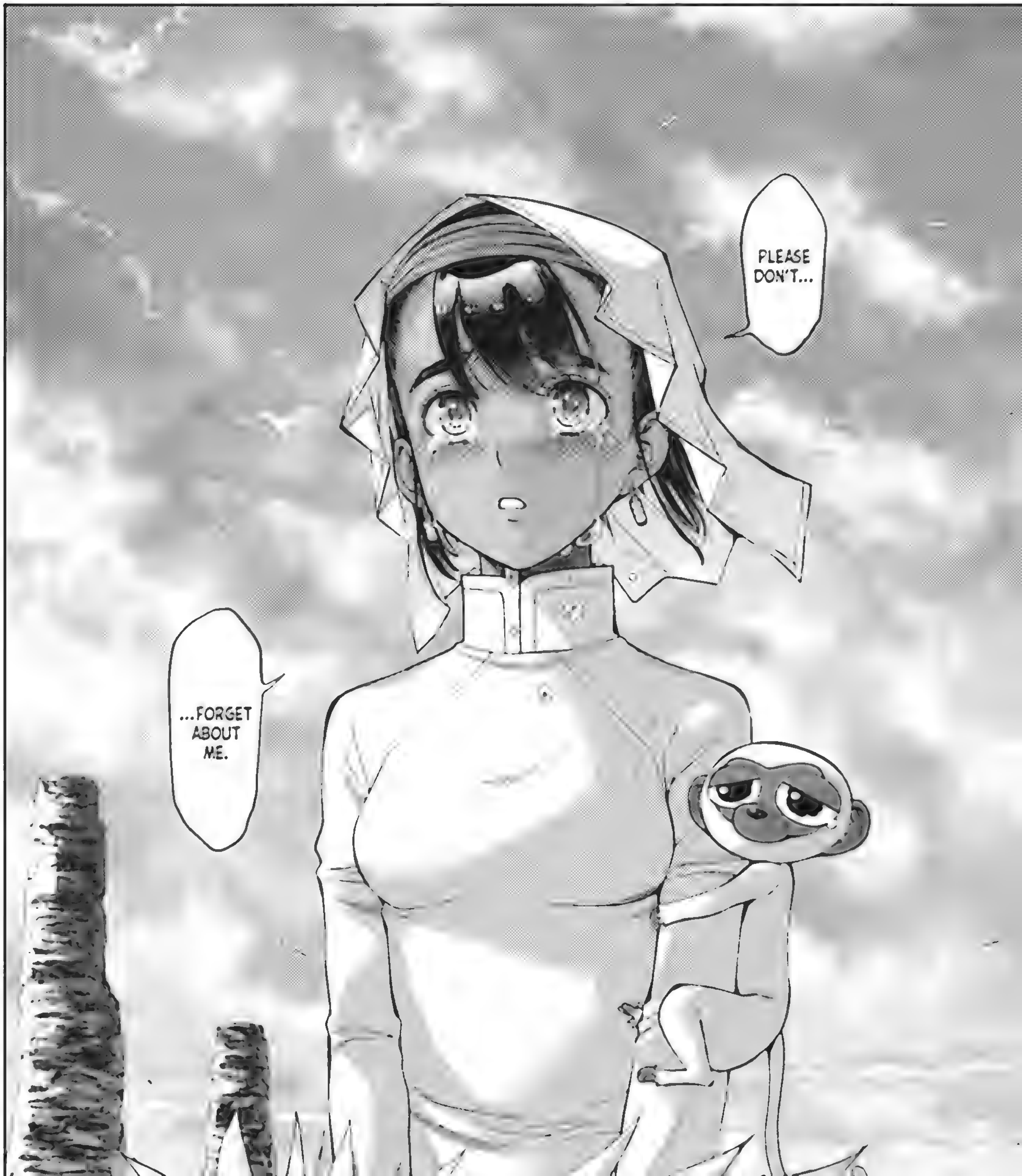
BUT  
THERE'S  
ONLY ONE  
COPY.







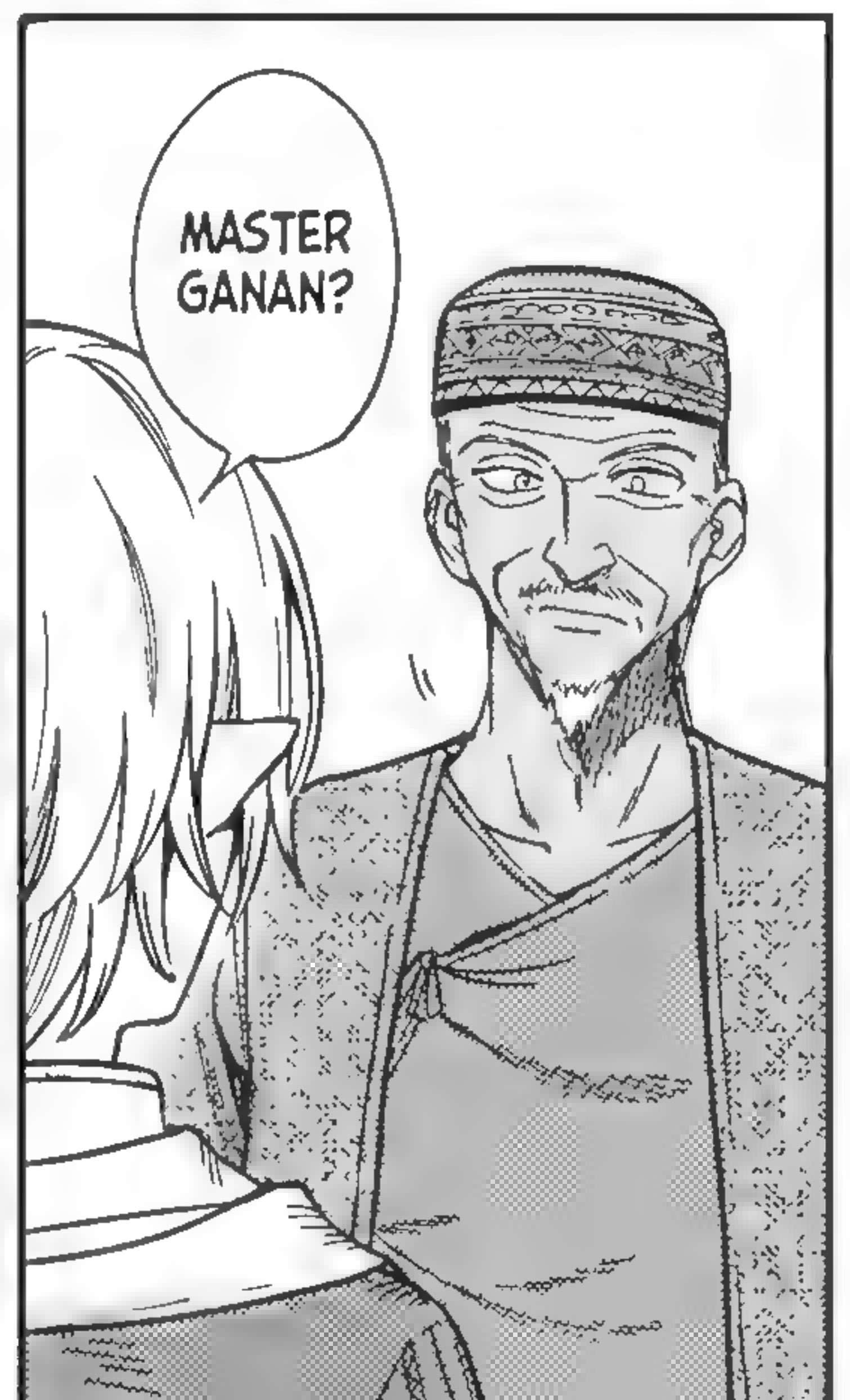
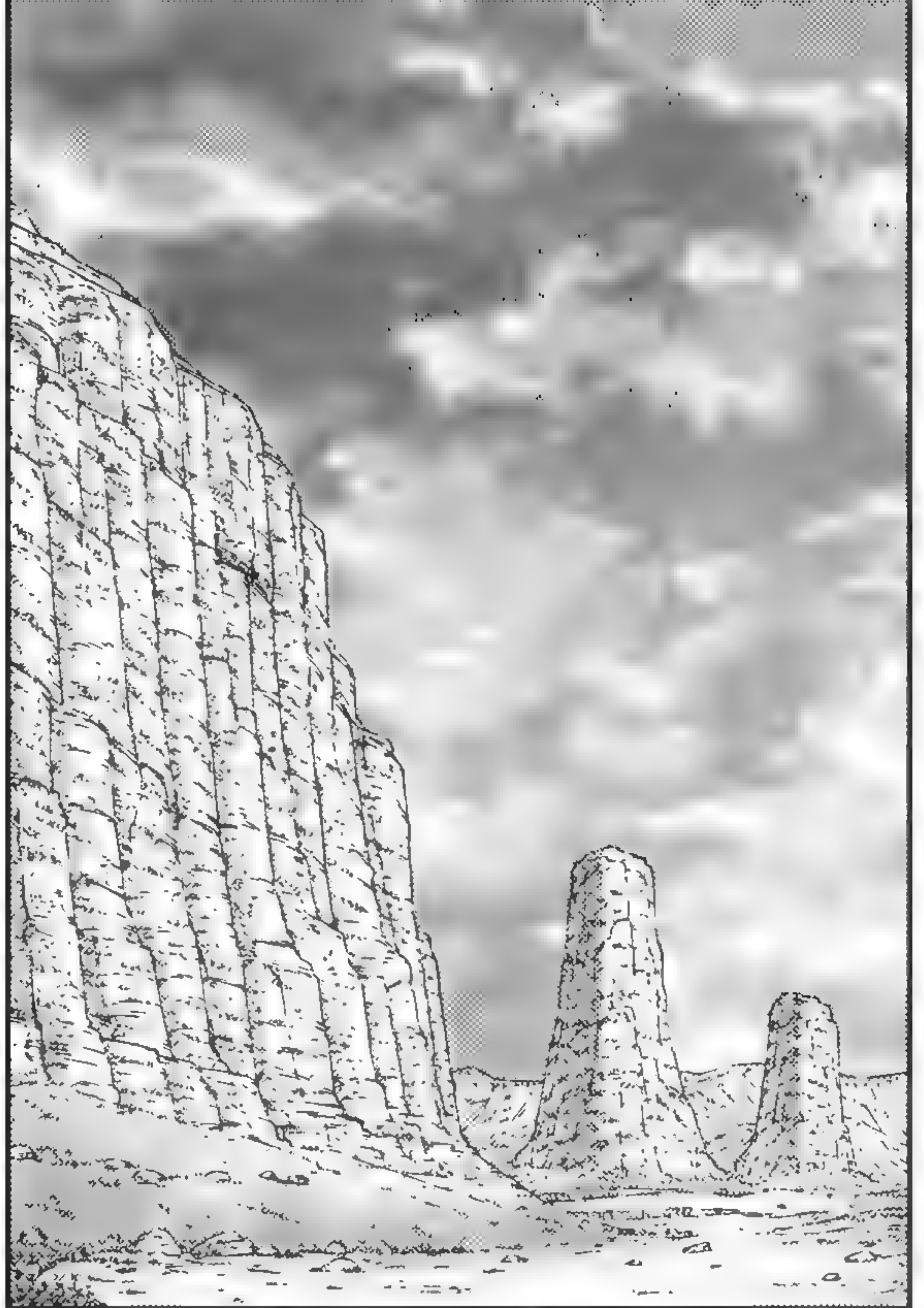
SO  
PLEASE...



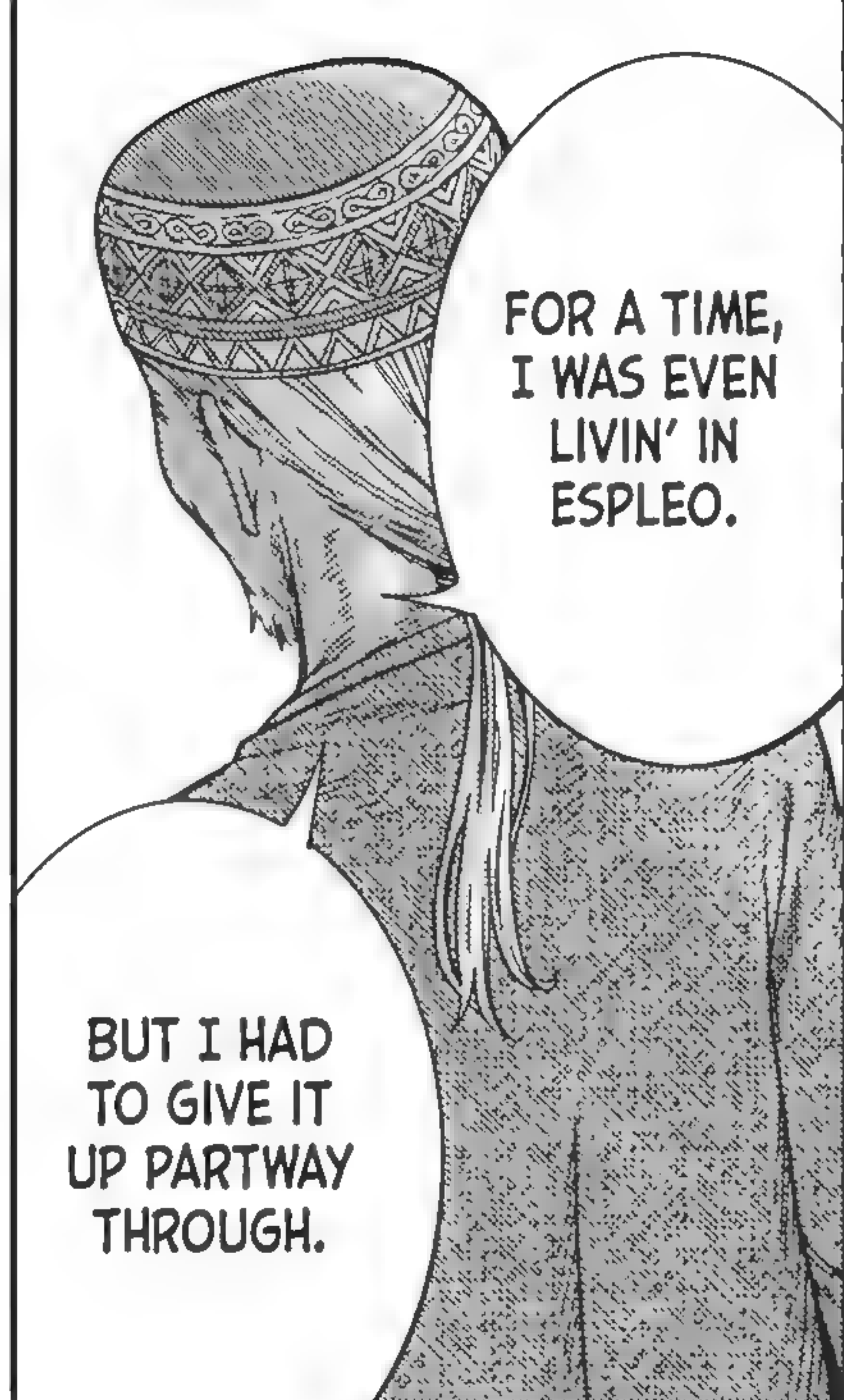
PLEASE  
DON'T...

...FORGET  
ABOUT  
ME.







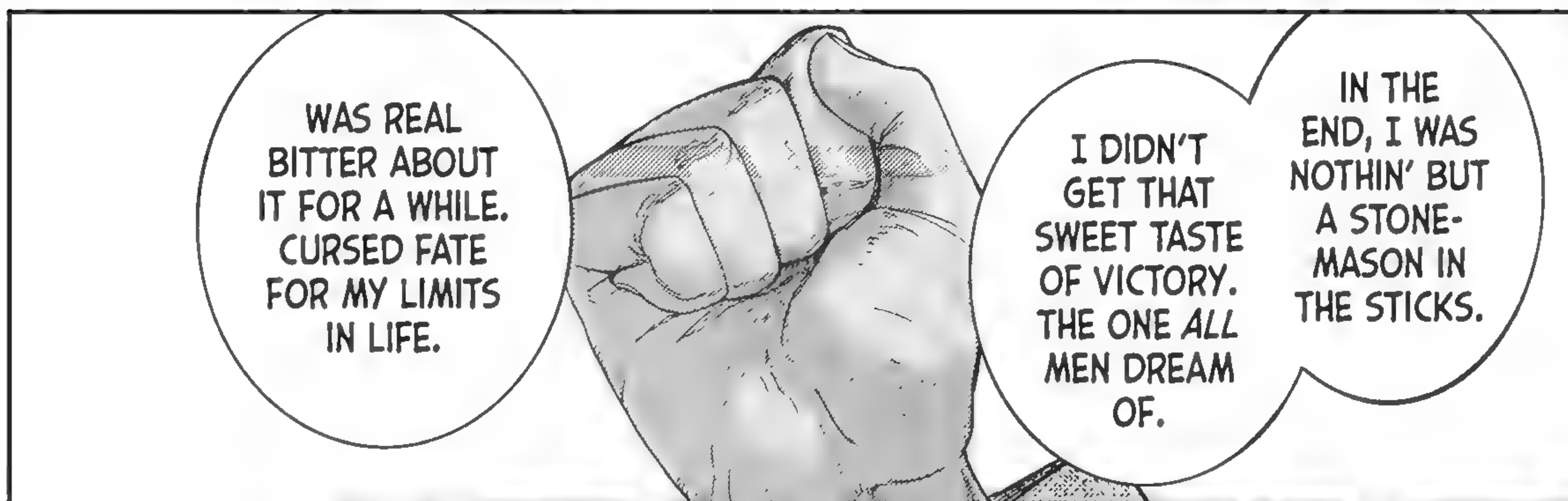


FOR A TIME,  
I WAS EVEN  
LIVIN' IN  
ESPLEO.

BUT I HAD  
TO GIVE IT  
UP PARTWAY  
THROUGH.



I HAD A  
DREAM  
MYSELF,  
Y'KNOW?  
OF BEIN' A  
HAMNA.



WAS REAL  
BITTER ABOUT  
IT FOR A WHILE.  
CURSED FATE  
FOR MY LIMITS  
IN LIFE.

I DIDN'T  
GET THAT  
SWEET TASTE  
OF VICTORY.  
THE ONE ALL  
MEN DREAM  
OF.

IN THE  
END, I WAS  
NOTHIN' BUT  
A STONE-  
MASON IN  
THE STICKS.



BUT  
NOW...

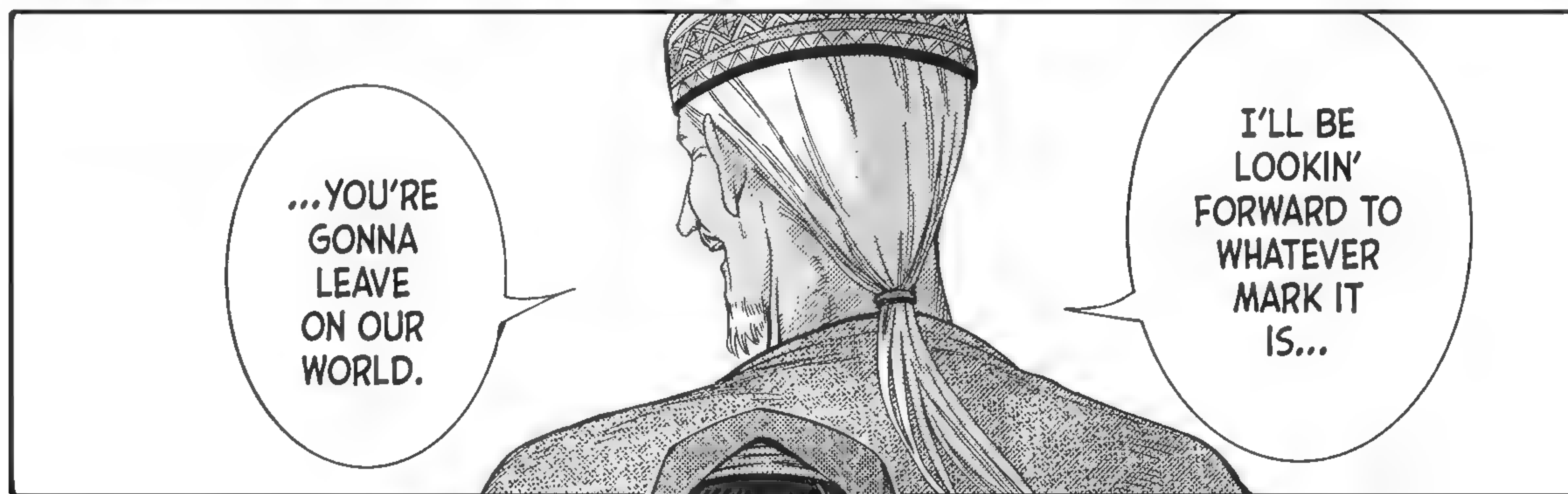
...SENDING  
YOU OFF LIKE  
THIS? IT MAKES  
IT ALL WORTH  
IT. FEELS LIKE  
MY LIFE MEANT  
SOMETHIN'  
AFTER ALL.





SOME PART  
OF YOUR LIFE  
IS MEANT FOR  
OTHERS.

THAT GOES  
FOR YOU, TOO,  
SO DON'T  
FORGET IT.

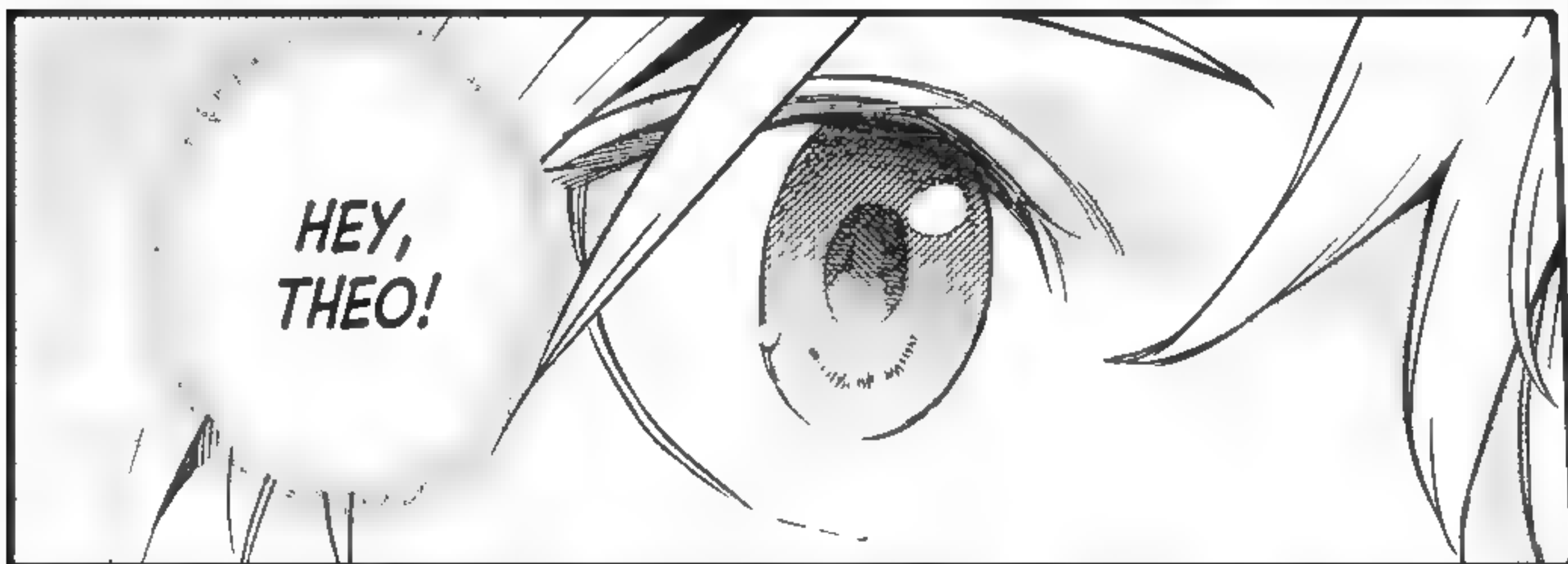
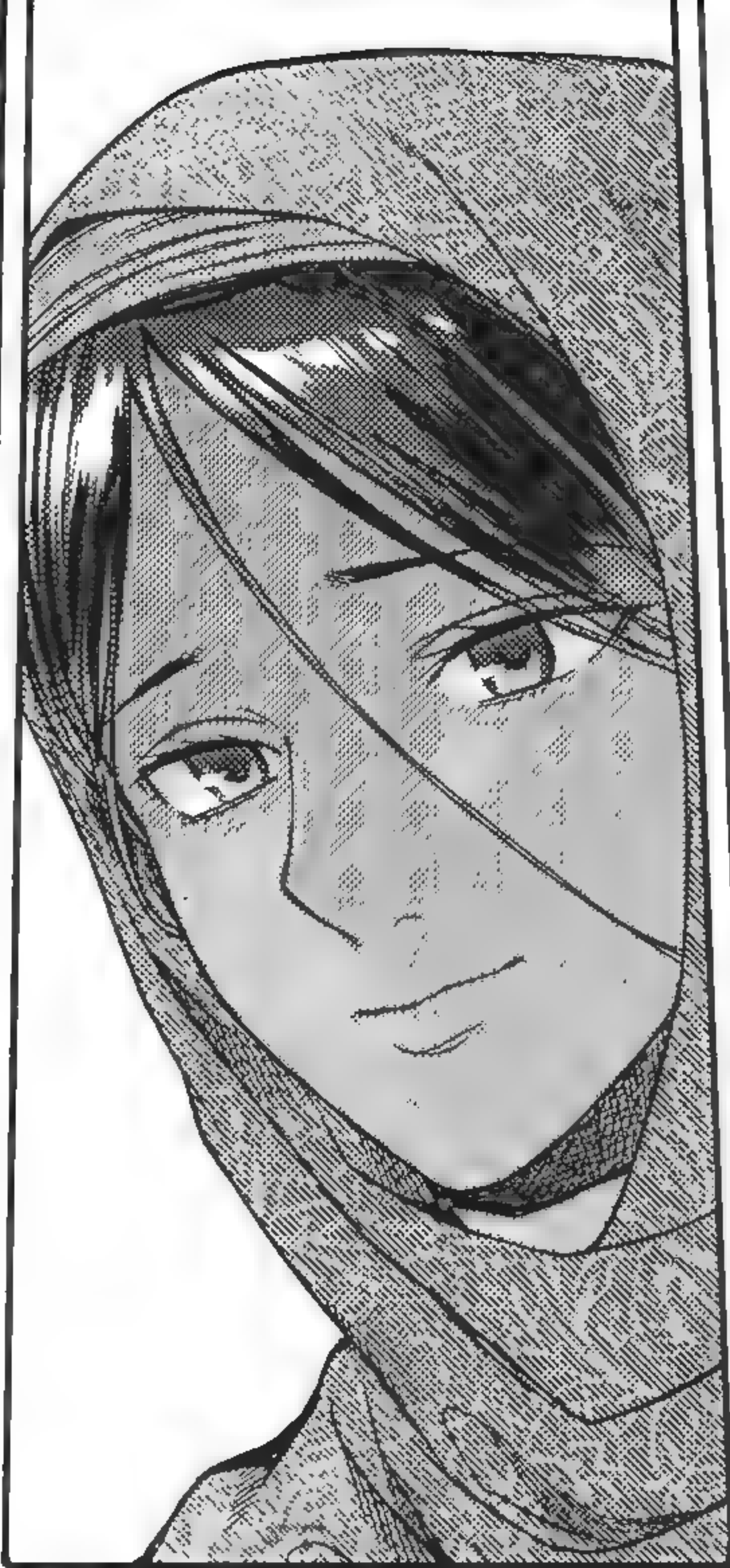


...YOU'RE  
GONNA  
LEAVE  
ON OUR  
WORLD.

I'LL BE  
LOOKIN'  
FORWARD TO  
WHATEVER  
MARK IT  
IS...



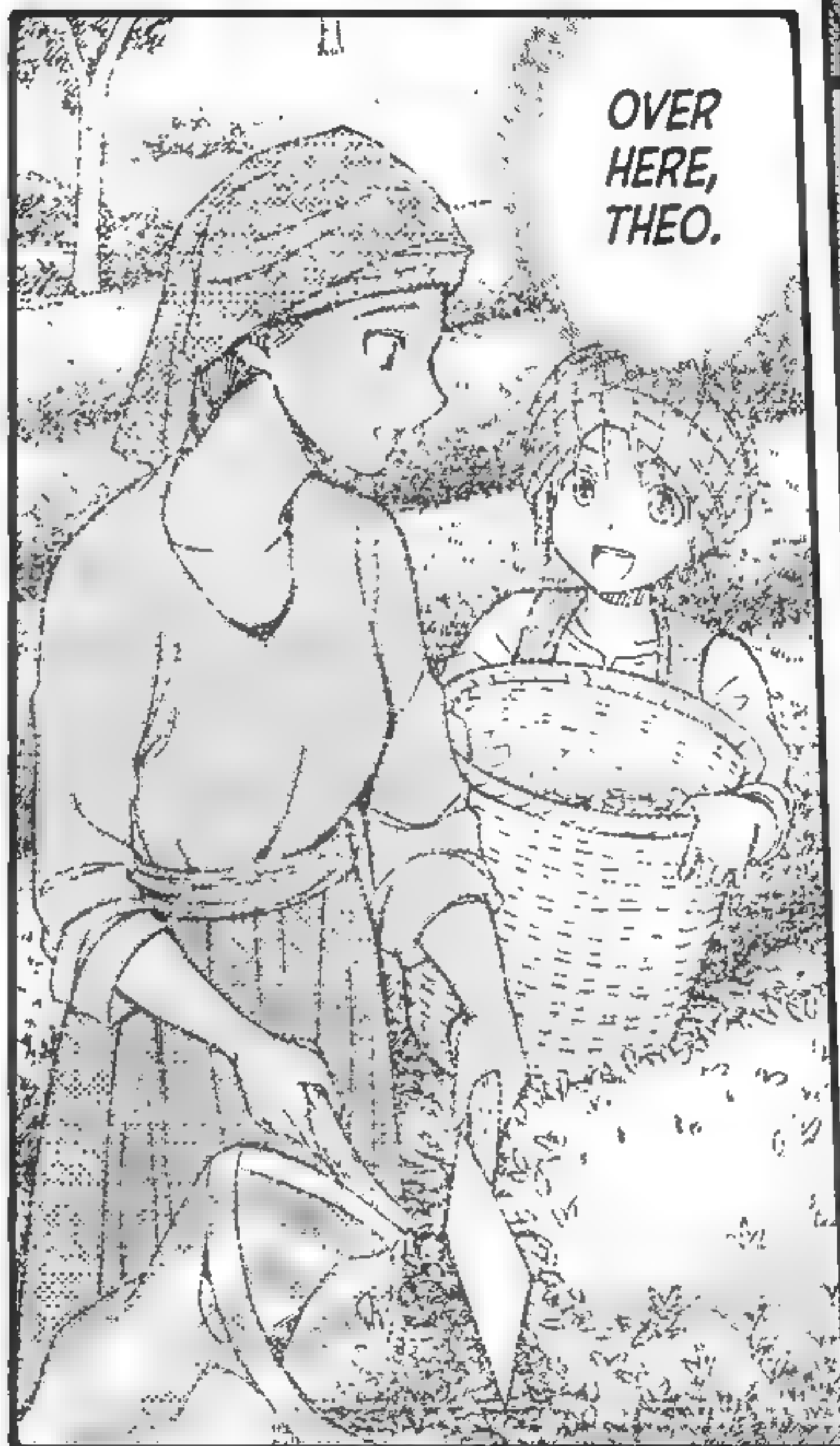




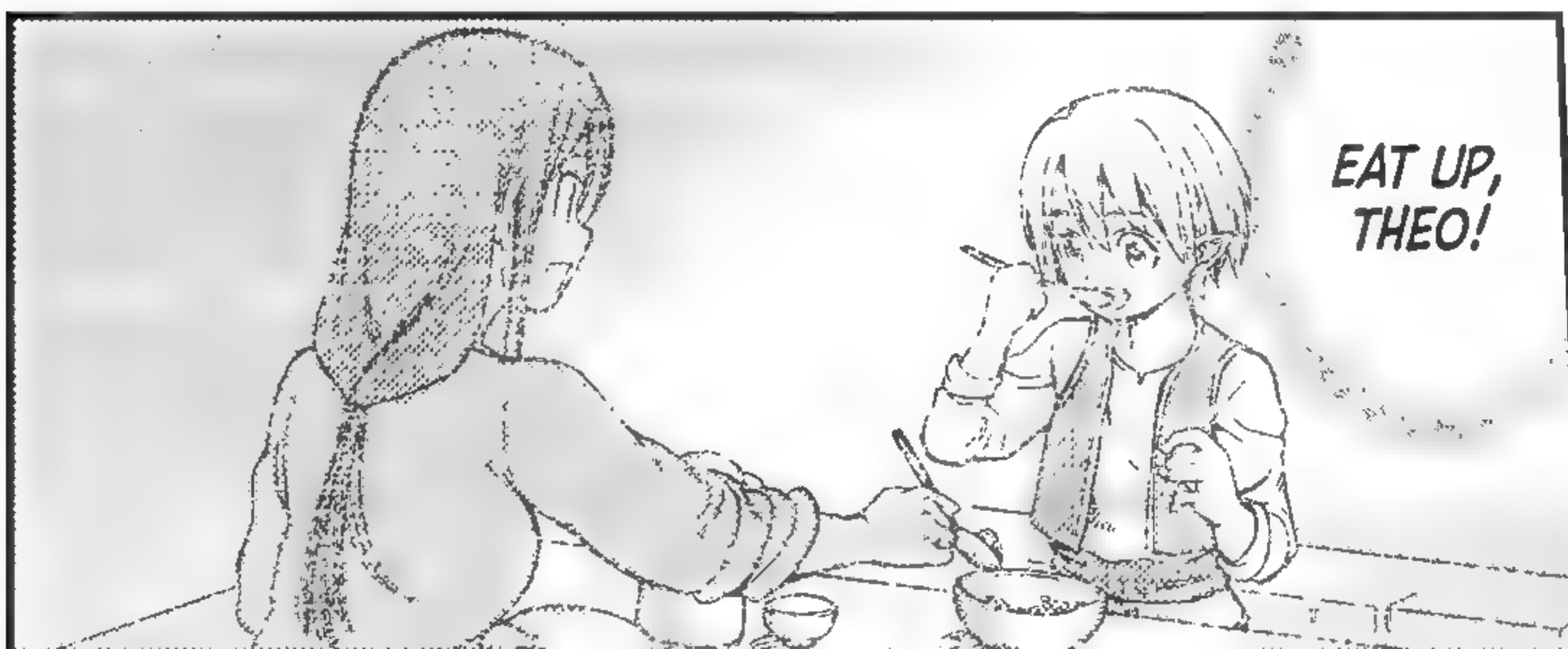
HEY,  
THEO!



GOOD-  
NIGHT,  
THEO.



OVER  
HERE,  
THEO.



EAT UP,  
THEO!



GOODBYE,  
THEO.





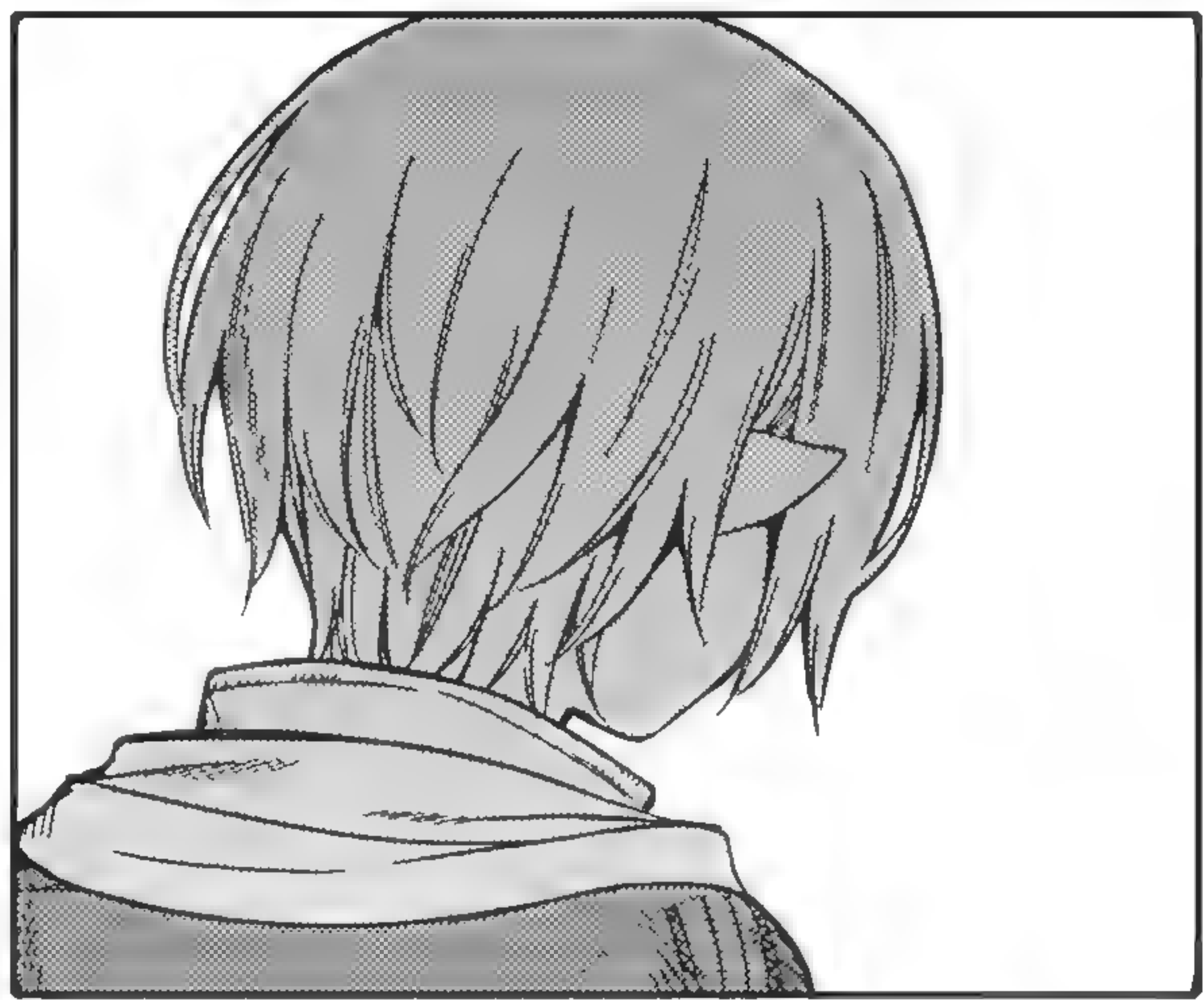


I LOVE YOU,  
THEO.



OH,  
DEAR  
ME.

CLASP

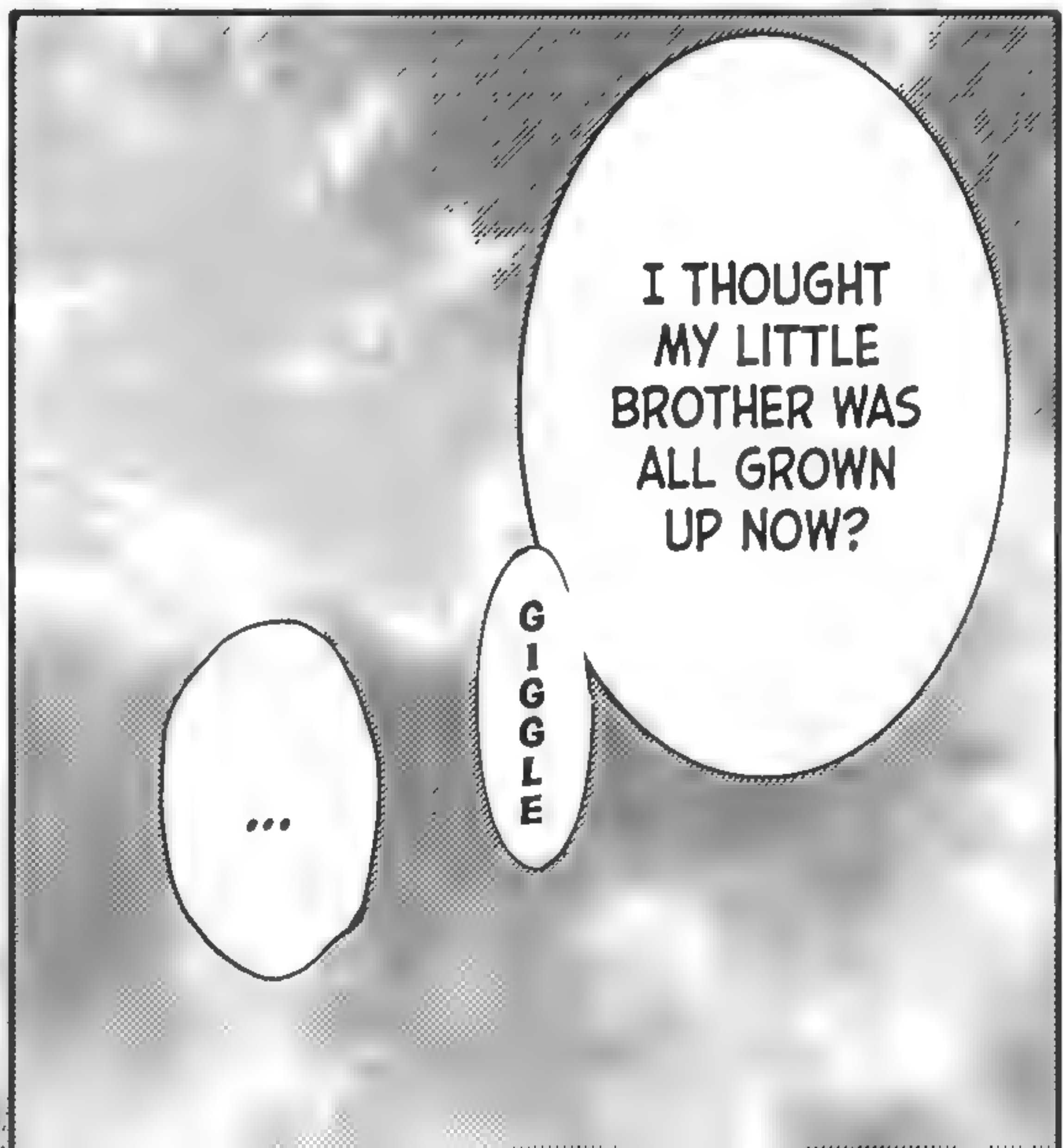


WHAT  
IS IT?



...TIFA?

...



I THOUGHT  
MY LITTLE  
BROTHER WAS  
ALL GROWN  
UP NOW?

GIGGLE

...



YES,  
THEO?



TIFA,  
I...



...TIFA...

...YES,  
THEO.



I  
KNOW.

TIFA...!

TIFA...

EVERYTHING'S  
GOING TO BE  
ALL RIGHT.

TIFA...

I'M  
RIGHT  
HERE.

YES?

HEY,  
TIFA?

...TIFA,  
I...

IT'S ALL  
RIGHT.





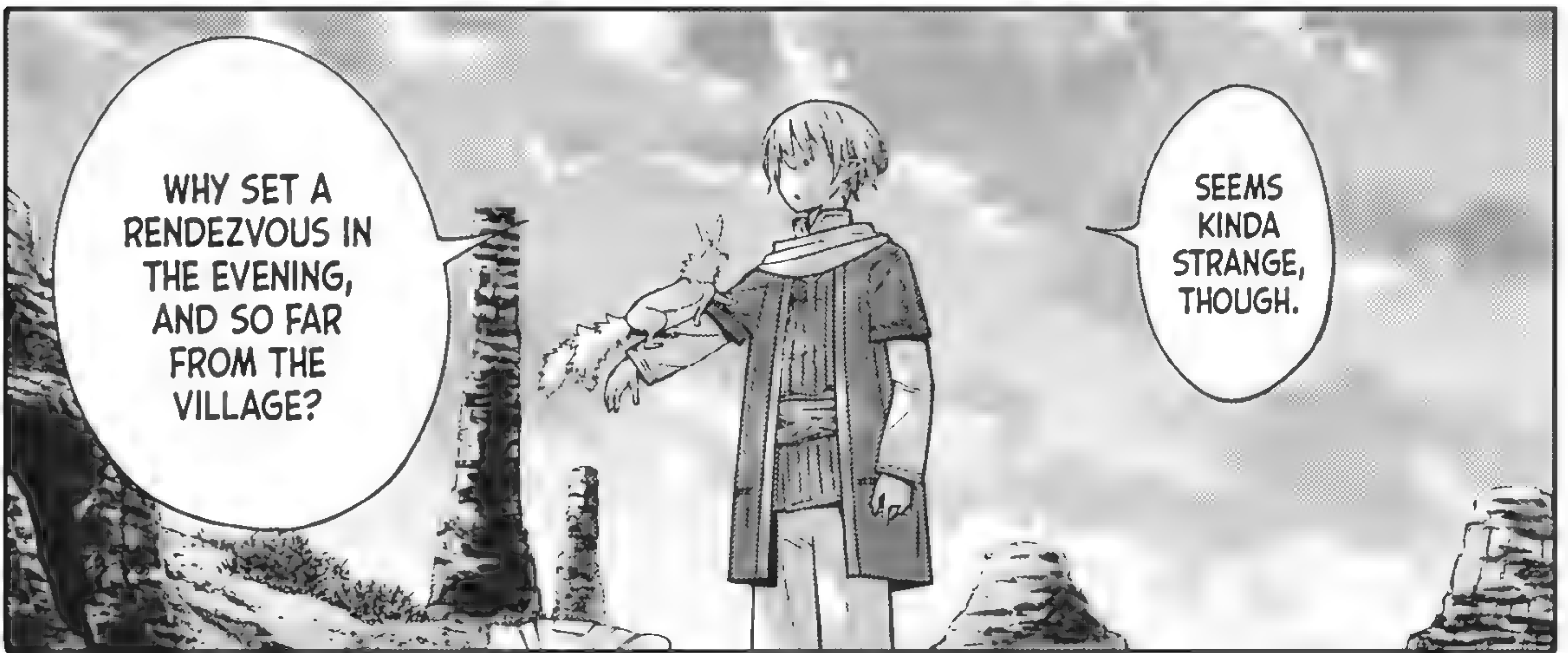
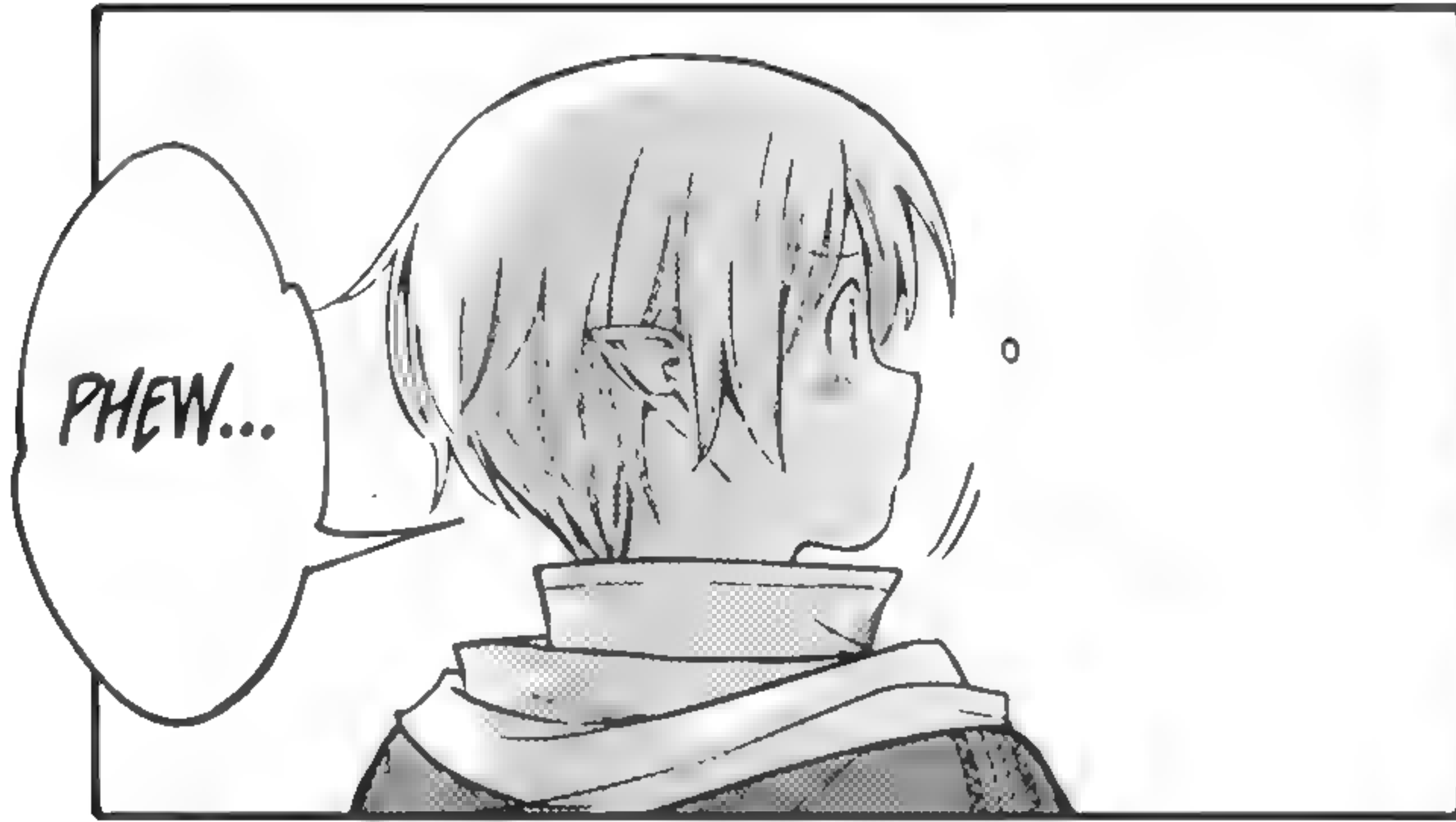
I KNOW  
YOU WILL.



I...!

I'M GONNA  
MAKE YOU  
PROUD AS  
A KAFNA!





















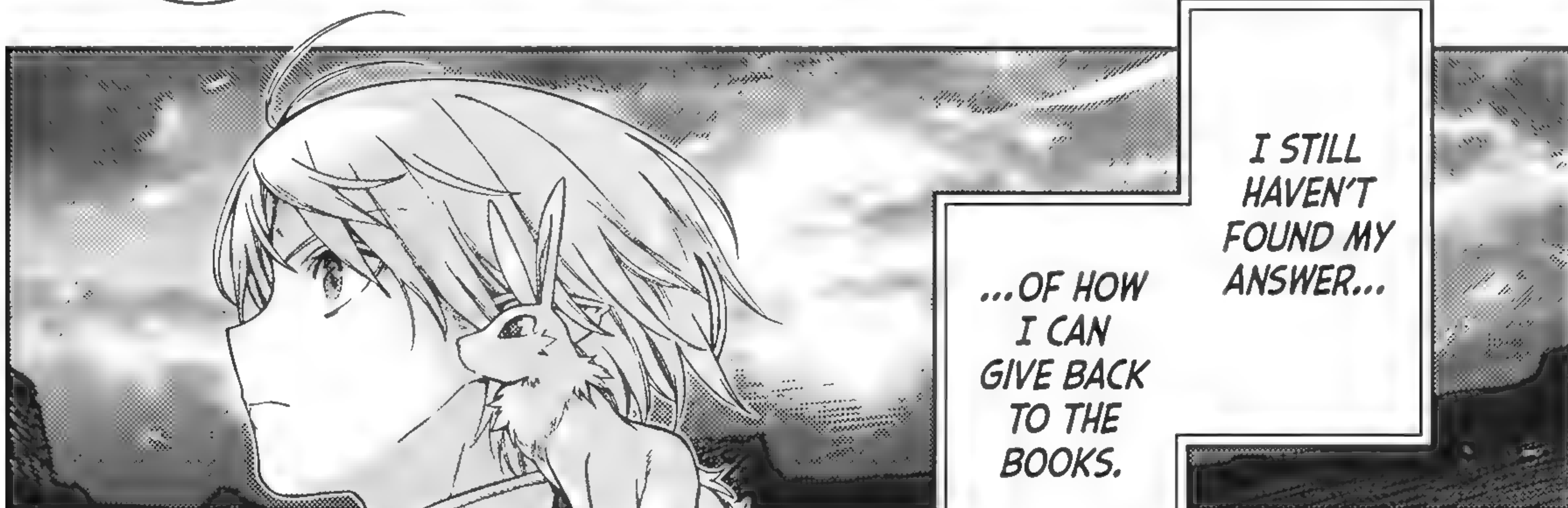
HOW  
DO YOU  
DO?

A PLEASURE  
TO MEET YOU,  
YOUNG KAFNA.



Y...

YOU  
MUST BE A  
SYRRANA!



...OF HOW  
I CAN  
GIVE BACK  
TO THE  
BOOKS.

I STILL  
HAVEN'T  
FOUND MY  
ANSWER...



I KNOW,  
BECAUSE  
MY SISTER  
SHOWED ME  
THAT IT'S  
TRUE.

BUT I KNOW  
THAT IF  
DEDICATE ALL  
I HAVE TO  
THE THINGS IN  
FRONT OF ME,  
I'LL SOMEDAY  
FIND IT.



*Please, will  
you not stay  
here with us  
forever?*

*Thanks to  
you, our  
island  
is again  
safe.*

*Master  
Shagraz-  
zat...*

PARTING  
WEIGHS HEAVY  
ON MY HEART,  
BUT ONWARD I  
MUST PRESS.

NAY, FOR  
MY JOB  
HERE IS  
DONE.

FOR  
SOMEWHERE  
BEYOND  
THE SEA'S  
HORIZON...

...A NEW  
AND UNKNOWN  
WORLD AWAITS  
MY ARRIVAL!





# 図書館の魔術師

+ Magus of the Library +

第一章

Part 1

「少年の旅立ち」

“The Boy’s Journey Begins”



ONWARD  
I MUST  
PRESS.

FOR I  
AM THE  
HERO...

...OF THE  
STORY OF  
MY LIFE.

**FIN**





To be continued.



## **Magus of the Library 3**

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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